

THE  
LATE TRAVELS

Of S. *Giacomo Baratti*,  
An *Italian Gentleman*,

Into the remote Countries of  
the *Abissins*, or of *Ethiopia Interior*.

Wherein you shall find an exact  
account of the Laws, Govern-  
ment, Religion, Discipline, Customs,  
&c. of the Christian people that do  
Inhabit there, with many Observati-  
ons which some may improve to the  
advantage and increase of Trade with them.

Together, with a Confirmation of this Relation  
drawn from the Writings of *Damianus de*  
*Goes*, and *Jo. Scaliger*, who agree with the  
Author in many particulars.

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Translated by G. D.

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To the Worshipful

*Thomas Windham Esq;*

SIR,

**H**ere are the Travels of our Italian Gentleman, that you have so long desired to peruse in our Language. It is an excellent description of that Great Empire that is so near related unto us by Religion, and nevertheless at such a distance from us. I hope it will fully answer your expectation, for you shall find in it most delightful passages, with an exact account of the Manners, Laws, Government, and of all other particulars in the Dominions of Ethiopia, worth the notice of an Inge-

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nious

acious Traveller. It may be that this  
small Treatise may meet with the  
fortune which such are to expect that  
thwart or disapprove of grand de-  
signs and furious enterprises. In  
matters not what aspersions may be  
raised to darken its Truth, and hinder  
its appearance and credit; I hope that  
probability of all the matters related  
& that may be also gathered from the  
place where it was first published, will  
dissipate all envious vapours, and  
cause Ethiopia to appear amongst  
in its own shape and form. One  
Gentleman had committed an act not  
agreeable to that Judgment that  
shews in his writings to publish things  
of a Kingdom so well known to most  
parts of Italy, by reason of the con-  
tinual correspondency that the Princes  
of it do entertain by their Factors  
with the Grand Neguz ) had there  
been any thing in his Relation not re-  
al, or untrue. His Book had not found  
th

that universal applause to betwice  
honoured with the Prefs, had it not  
found amongst his Country-men a re-  
ception suitable to its worth. Let the  
ill-natured and peevish minds, that  
credit nothing but what they see, e-  
steem of this Translation, and of the  
original as they please; I know Sir,  
that all sober-minded Persons as your  
self, will find both Sweetness and  
profit in the Reading of it; however  
I should desire, that you will look upon  
these labours as a Confirmation of  
that Title that I shall alwayes covet,  
mean of

Sir,

Your most faithful and ob-  
liged Servant,

G. D.

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A

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

COUNTRY

OF

Precious John,

Vulgarly called

PRESTER JOHN.

— The Empire of *Aethiopia*, is  
not inferiour to the lar-  
gest in the World, if we  
consider that vast Continent that

B

was

was anciently, and should be now  
under the Command of the law-  
ful Heir. It contained above thirty  
large Kingdoms, and many  
fruitful Provinces well furnished  
with Men, and stored with Rich  
Commodities; but the late un-  
happy Wars with the Neighbour-  
ing Kings have much weakened this  
growing Empire, and reduced it  
to a little number.

The Turks, the *Gialas*, the  
King of *Mozambique*, the *Moors*  
and several others that surround  
this Christian Principality, have  
dis-membred the Provinces and  
Kingdoms that were anciently  
subject to it, and submitted them  
to their several Jurisdictions. The  
*Mosses* have seized on the *Sollat*  
coast, the *Turks* have conquered  
the most fruitful Kingdoms that  
command upon *Egypt*, the *Gialas* a  
war-like Re-public of *Africans*  
con-

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command several large Territories that belong unto this Imperial Crown. The King of *Mozambique* and the rest have robbed it of its chief Jewels and Ornaments, so that at present it is nothing so large, nor so considerable as formerly it was. The cause of these great Losses must be attributed to the Cowardise and Inexperience of the Inhabitants more inclinable to Superstition than war-like feats, and to the diversity of Religion in which these Nations differ much from the *Abyssins*. The *Turks* and *Moors* are nourished up in the *Mahometan*, the *Ginlas* and they of *Mozambique* in the Heathenish *Idolatry* (which cannot comply with the Christian Truth. Professors of the former, have a natural antipathy against the Principles of the latter; inasmuch

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that they can scarce suffer them the  
breath in the same air. This hatred  
entertained by the different way  
of worshipping the Creator, has  
fomented all these wars and  
troubles that have for many hun-  
dred years shaken the Abyssinian  
Empire, and separated from it the  
most excellent, and the large  
Provinces that did belong unto  
it; so that at present it is reduced  
to a very narrow Circuit in com-  
parison of what it was. The Em-  
peror nevertheless maintains the  
same State as he did formerly, and  
claims a right to all those King-  
doms that he hath lost. His pre-  
sent Dominions are not above  
300 English miles in length, and  
60 in breadth; they consist of  
the Kingdoms, *Amara*, *Tigrai*,  
*Angot*, *Xoa*, *Gojama*, *Bahant*,  
*Damut*, *Fategar*, *Barnaga*, *Sail*,  
*Barn*, *Tigrai*, *Yangué*,; so that



they are limited on the North by  
*Nubia*, and the Mountains and  
 lands that separate them from E-  
 gypt, on the East, by the Kingdoms  
 of *Zangebara*, *Aiana* and *Adel*,  
 which lie upon the red Sea; on the  
 South, the Provinces of *Casutes*  
 and *Fungi* do shut it, and on the  
 West this Empire confines upon  
*Mongo*, *Medra* and the *Blacks*. This  
 rich and In-land Country I have  
 discovered by my Travels, and  
 now that I am so happily returned  
 to my own Native soil, after so  
 long and troublesome a Journey,  
 I owe to my Country a Relation  
 of those things that I have learned,  
 which I may say, never any knew  
 so much of this place before, as  
 the Reader may find in this Book.  
 In the year 1655. some Mer-  
 chants of *Florence* were preparing  
 to sail for *Alexandria*, I resolved  
 to adventure my self in their

Company, out of a great desire to  
 visit the Holy-Land, and see those  
 rein places. I had then received  
 some discontent at home, which  
 made me seek my satisfaction  
 abroad; having therefore furnis-  
 ed my self with large sums of mo-  
 ney, and a Man Servant, I embark-  
 ed with them in a Dutch boat  
 tom, and in a fortnights time  
 landed in that ancient City which  
*Alexander* had built. The plague  
 was then very hot in that place  
 which obliged us to a short stay  
 there. Some French Merchants  
 were then going for Grand Cairo  
 my company perswaded me to  
 take my journey with them, and  
 visit the curiosities of that large  
 City; I was not willing to take  
 that Road so soon, for I desired  
 first to pay my devotions at the  
 Sepulcher of our Lord, but the  
 perswasions of my friends forced me

time to leave that journey until my  
 return, because we could not  
 find a fit opportunity to travel in-  
 to the Holy-Land. I went there-  
 fore with the French Merchants  
 to *Cairo*, and spent some days  
 here in viewing all the Rarities of  
 that Great City; we had a sight  
 here and in our way of many An-  
 tiquities which are so well known  
 to all the world, that I shall not  
 go much as mention them. I had  
 not been there a month, but a *Ca-*  
*stellan* was preparing for the Red  
*Sea*. The French Consul, at whose  
 house I lay, encouraged me to  
 take that occasion of discovering  
 those Parts where Christians of  
 Quality seldom adventure  
 themselves; assuring me, that it  
 would be worth my while to see  
 those remote places, and discover  
 something to the Christian world,  
 which was not known before. It

happened that as I was meditating upon this journey, an *Abuna* or a High Priest of the *Abyssinians* came to the Patriarchs house from *Jerusalem*, in his journey towards *Ethiopia*, intending to take the same way as the *Caravan*, this cause it was the safest. This accident I lookt upon as an invitation of providence amongst those *African* Christians that are not well known to our Northern Climate. Having therefore furnished myself with Moneys and Bills of Exchange for so long a journey, I sought the acquaintance of *Abuna* before my departure. It was no difficulty to obtain, for he was learned in the *Italian* Tongue and well versed in the manner and Customs of the *Franks*; he was a Man of a swarthy countenance both pleasant and grave, of high stature, about 60 years

itage, very lusty; he had not many  
 to attend him, for he was not wil-  
 ling to discover himself amongst  
 the *Turks*, who might have made  
 advantage of him, by obliging  
 him to larger disbursements than  
 his Estate could allow: I was re-  
 solved to accompany him into his  
 own Country, and visit the Court  
 of the great *Negus* so famous all  
 over the world; we therefore en-  
 gaged our selves in the *Caravan*.  
 I went for an *Italian* pilgrim,  
 whose Person is much respected  
 amongst the Heathens themselves,  
 and least subject to the affronts  
 and insults of strangers. The *A-*  
*buna* was also in the disguise of a  
 Merchant, he had with him some  
 Goods of a small value; we began  
 our journey in the moneth of  
*March*, and through several mis-  
 fortunes we arrived at the Port  
 Town of the Red Sea called *Suez*,

a famous place for Trade, it is the passage into *Arabia Indostan* and all other Countries of *Asia*. Here are therefore a great company of Merchants of all Nations that enrich this place, which otherwise would be very unconsiderable. It is a City fortified with a Castle and a Fort upon the mold as big as *Pisa*. The buildings are large, fitter for Merchants than Noble men; some are beautified with black and white Marble curiously wrought. Here is a Synagogue of the *Jews* much frequented on the Sabbath day, here is also an Idol Temple for the *Gentiles*, but the poor Christians have no other place appointed for their Devotions, but their Chambers and Houses. The *Abuna* found here some Abyssin Merchants, at whose dwellings he was courteously received, and honourably entertained;

they invited me to share  
 with him in their Hospitality ; I  
 accepted their kind offer, because  
 I had no mind to separate my self  
 from him, seeing my design was  
 to accompany him as far as his  
 Emperours Court. Here we re-  
 mained several months, because  
 we heard of an Army of *Turks* and  
*Moors* that were making an In-  
 road into the Territories of the  
*Abyssins*, we were advised to ex-  
 pect with patience their return, for  
 otherwise we might have met  
 them in the way and been brought  
 back into Captivity, our liberty  
 was too precious a thing to be un-  
 considerately ventured we, there-  
 fore remained a long while in this  
 City expecting a fair opportuni-  
 ty to be gone. At last one pre-  
 sented it self not unworthy of our  
 acceptance, the *Turks* *Basha* of  
*Egypt* sent an Ambassadour to the  
 Pre-



*Precious John*, who coming  
*Suez*, we thought we could not  
 meet with a greater happiness  
 we could be admitted into his re-  
 tinue. We had some difficulty to  
 obtain this favour, but upon the  
 offer of 200 Crowns, it was rea-  
 dily granted. He took his leave  
 of this City with a great Train  
 and we accompanied him upon  
 Mules, we passed through many  
 different Soils, some fruitful, e-  
 specially of Date-trees, others ve-  
 ry barren. The most part of our  
 way was over craggy Mountains  
 where nothing did present it self  
 to our view but wild Beasts far  
 different from those that I have  
 seen in *Europe*. We passed  
 through some inhabited Land  
 where very strong Castles were e-  
 rected to defend the Country  
 from the enemies, the *Moors* did  
 possess them, for this Nation  
 dis-



dispersed all over this Country,  
 we found also some stragling  
 Tents of *Arabians* that wandred  
 up and down, we met with no-  
 thing remarkable, but Poverty and  
 Misery, that seem to have taken  
 up their Residence amongst the  
 people that inhabit in this part of  
 the world far in the Country.  
 Their diet is such things as this  
 barren habitation will afford them;  
 their bread is a root, their flesh is  
 of such wild Creatures as they  
 can happily kill, their Cloathing  
 proclaims their needy condition,  
 it is made of a large leaf of a Tree  
 that grows in the Forrests and  
 Woods, neither is it sufficient to  
 cover the back, so it hides the *pu-  
 denda hominis*, they are abundant-  
 ly content, for that purpose a  
 string is ty'd above their middle  
 unto which these leaves are faste-  
 ned, so that like so many Pen-  
 dants

dants they fall down and cover  
 what nature teaches to hide. They  
 have one conveniency and advantage  
 which they enjoy above other  
 common people, as our Princes  
 and Noblemen of *Europe* they  
 wear not their Apparel long, they  
 change often, almost every day.  
 These rascally sort of people that  
 nature hath brought forth amongst  
 these mountains, did appear unto  
 us almost like Savages. Do  
 they did not willingly come in our  
 company, nor are they desirous to  
 change their habitation, their bodies  
 were big, and their Members  
 thick and swarthy, they spoke a  
 mixt *Arabian*, not well to be under-  
 stood but by those that know all  
 the dialects of that language; those  
 that live in the fortified places are  
 far more sociable, they had chosen  
 the most convenient seats for their  
 residence, some of the ground was  
 fit

to Sow and Plow, and to feed  
 the Cattel. We were admitted into  
 one of these Castles that was e-  
 rected in the passage of a mountain  
 very conveniently to hinder and  
 stop the course of any enemy; the  
 Commander in chief was a *Moor*,  
 he received us with some expres-  
 sions of affection, but before we  
 departed we were forced to pay  
 a tax for our entertainment, ten  
 Dollars a piece, for that is a Coin  
 that is current over all the world.  
 The Embassadour and those that  
 could wait upon him were free, but  
 all strangers that did follow  
 him in his journey, they were ob-  
 liged to lay down the money or  
 return back again. This little Ty-  
 rant had gathered together some  
 numbers of men, who lived thus in  
 this difficult place upon all passen-  
 gers, forcing them to contribute to  
 the maintenance of their lazy bo-  
 dies.

dies. There are many such people that exact upon strangers, the Governors for the *Turk* do wink at them, because at a certain time of the year they send a sweet perfume unto them, a Purse full of Gold and Silver, and in consideration of this yearly tribute, they suffer them to exact, cheat and rob the poor Travellers and Merchants. We advanced far into the Country many days journey before we came to the *Turks* Army, they were upon their return from pillaging the Christians, they were laden with spoils and slaves. They made as much haste as they could in their march, for the *Precious John* had gathered his Army together, and was in the pursuit of them from *Sæx*; we came first into the Country called by the Inhabitants *Ganfila*, next to *Dafroha*, and so through *Barnagasso*, *Lacchi* and

second part of *Dangali*; we arrived  
 the last upon the borders. The bo-  
 ink of the *Turks* Army when we  
 me met it was near a large lake full of  
 excellent fish. The people of  
 this Country are ignorant of all  
 kind of Arts, they have not the  
 address of fishing; with Bows and  
 arrows, they kill Birds and Beasts  
 upon which they feed and live;  
 they own the *Turks* for their Ma-  
 y bers against their will. This lake  
 Army in the Kingdom of *Bamagasso*,  
 from which was lately conquered and  
 they taken from the Great *Neguz*, the  
 slaves people retain some Reliques of  
 Christianity, but with that igao-  
 ne Prece, that one can scarce distin-  
 Army with them from the Heathens,  
 pursuit less it be by the name, up and  
 the first down the Country some sorry  
 the In uses are erected, fitter for wild  
*Dafro* beasts than men. The walls are of  
 o, *Lacc* and stones, the roofs of a  
 and C sort

fort of slender Cane and Reeds  
 which grow near the water side  
 and in low places, the middle of  
 is supported by a Pillar of wood  
 that stands in the huts, and keeps  
 the whole Fabrick from falling  
 the ground, for this miserable peo-  
 ple are not acquainted with the  
 Art of Architecture. The Towns  
 are composed of this sort of dwell-  
 ings, there are not many of them  
 but those that are, have chosen  
 the best Land for their Situation  
 near some fresh waters or lakes  
 for unless it be in these places the  
 ground is parched up all the year  
 long, but during the time of  
 Rains. In Egypt they never  
 but in *Aethiopia* they are very  
 extraordinary about the month  
*January* and *February*. Such  
 violent showers do pour down, that  
 no creature is able to abide with-  
 out a shelter, several parties

Reede the *Turks* Army were stragling  
 fide up and down, but the main body  
 of was at the lake *Gueresh*. When we  
 wocame up to them they were com-  
 kee posed of Horse and Foot about  
 alling six thousand, not able to abide a  
 le pe combat with the *Abyssins*, there-  
 ith more they thought upon nothing  
 Towise than a safe retreat. They had  
 f dwoundred the Country people  
 of themat were yet subject to *Prestet*  
*chohohn*, and had carryed men, wo-  
 mnation and children into captivity.  
 lake sad sight it was unto us that  
 ces ere Christians, to behold our  
 he yoethren and our Christian name  
 e of miserably abused by the enemy  
 ver to Christ, our *Abuna* could not  
 very strain from tears, he laboured to  
 onth lieve some of them, and to com-  
 uch vt them in their affliction, but for  
 wn, that of discovering himself, he was  
 de wit willing to expresse too much  
 arties of kindness to them. The



Embassadours credit saved  
 from all affronts, we lodged  
 nights with them; for during  
 time they expected the com-  
 up of some Troups that were  
 to pillage. It is the custom of  
 people that border upon the  
 byssins, once a year to visit the  
 Territories, for they meet with  
 considerable deal of plunder with  
 little or no hazard. The Abyssinians  
 are more superstitious than we  
 like, they have been renowned  
 Valour, but at present they are  
 Cowards, they suffer every  
 Nation that is daring to destroy  
 their borders, which is the fault  
 chiefly of their Governors;  
 having so much Riches as they  
 have, so many Mines of Gold  
 and other considerable Com-  
 modities, they might allow a part  
 of some war-like people to fight  
 under their banners, and assist them  
 against



against their troublesome Neigh-  
 bours. At present they have little  
 communication with people of  
 their Religion, which if they had,  
 it would be a mighty support to  
 them and their interest; When  
 the *Portugueses* were sent with an  
 inconsiderable party into those  
 Dominions, the *Abyssin* Empe-  
 ror felt the benefit of forrein  
 succours, for the enemy was bea-  
 ten in two battels, and forc'd to  
 yield to the Christian Valour.  
 Amongst the Prisoners several  
 Noblemens children were seen,  
 who by their Meen and Garb  
 were distinguishable from the or-  
 dinary sort. These poor creatures  
 were led to be sold in *Turky* and  
 other places as beasts, and the  
 worst is, they were to be forced  
 to renounce their Religion. What  
 grief was it to their Christian  
 parents, to suffer such a loss, to  
 have

have their Sons and Daughters  
mongst the Infidels? This  
conveniency might be prevented  
did these In-land Christians keep  
a strong Guard upon their co-  
fines, or with a stout resolute  
labour to drive these Robbers  
from their habitations, or labour  
to revenge themselves, by carrying  
the War into their own Land  
or by seizing on the Sea coast, and  
the passages of the mountains  
that limit their Country, where  
they might place such strong  
Castles and numerous Guards  
might keep the *Turks* and *Moslems*  
from all such attempts: But  
when we have fully taken a view  
of *Abassia* or *Aethiopia Superior*  
and of the Emperour and Go-  
vernment, we may be better able  
to see the cause of these disorders  
that happen almost every year  
in some corner of the Land. Having  
the

hters therefore spent some days in the  
 This view of our Christian brethren  
 events that were led into Captivity, we  
 ns ke took our leave of them and of the  
 eir co<sup>rk</sup>s Army, and marched on our  
 solutio<sup>n</sup> journey towards a large Town of  
 bers the Kingdom of *Tigremabon* called  
 r labo<sup>as</sup> *asban*, it lies beyond a large Ri-  
 y carrier that runs through *Africa*, it  
 n Laneceives the tribute from other  
 oast, small Rivers, and then it runs  
 ountai<sup>n</sup> through many Countreys until it  
 , wherischarges it self into *Nilus*, the  
 st people of the Country call it in  
 uards their language *Togassi* and others  
*Mofuekrabock*. Were it not for this  
 : River, it were not possible to sub-  
 a visit in this In-land Country, but it  
 periodivides it self into so many bran-  
 nd Ghes, and waters so large a Terri-  
 ter abry, that no part of the Empe-  
 ifordours Country is without some  
 yearenefit that it brings unto it. The  
 Hav<sup>y</sup> Country round about did hear  
 the

the Marches of the enemies rage and fury, the Towns were burnt to the ground, the people either fled or carried into captivity, the land and trees were not spared in some places, for they had cut down a great quantity to facilitate their passages over some Rivers. Here we came into a Country far more fruitful than any other I had seen in *Africa*, it was capable of more improvement did the Inhabitants skill and industry answer the goodness of the soil, I do not find but this part might bear as excellent Fruits as any other place of the world. The heat of the climate quickens nature in the production of all Vegetatives, so that it is blessed with two Springs every year, or at least with two Crops of everything that is sown or planted, unless it be in those places the

want the benefit of water; we  
 met here with some flying parts  
 of the *Turks* Army riding apace  
 after the main body, for they  
 were pursued by several troops of  
 the *Abyssins*. Those thieves had  
 adventured almost near the Im-  
 perial Tents without resistance,  
 not without considerable plunder  
 able to reward them for their  
 labours; we proceeded on our  
 way about two leagues before we  
 came to meet with the inhabitants  
 of the Country, the first were a  
 party of horse-men very well  
 mounted pursuing their enemies,  
 they complained unto the Embas-  
 sadour of the *Turks* violences, we  
 were afraid that they would have  
 violated the Law of Nations upon  
 him, they received us with that  
 rage; the presence of the *Abuna*  
 hindered them from offering injury  
 to his Person; Him they received  
 with

with all expressions of honour and kindness, and suffered some of them to return back to guard him, the rest continued on their way. They overtook the *Turks* at the ford of a little River very busie to get over their Captives and Goods, we heard that they fell upon them with a wonderful fury and recovered much of the spoils, killing great numbers of them. They returned afterwards in triumph with much honour, having so successfully encountred with their enemies. In the mean whiles we proceeded in our journey towards the Emperour of *Abassia*, who hearing of the *Abuna's* arrival, sent some of his Court to Complement him and bid him welcome; where ever he passed the Clergy & people came to receive him with more signs of kindness than pomp, the processions  
of

of the people came to meet us at the entrance of the towns, and when we came within sight of the Emperours tents, he sent all the Court to receive the *Abuna*. I did carefully observe all the ceremonies of Reception and Instalment. The *Abuna* as soon as he came within the tents, went to kiss the Emperours Girdle. He was standing in a stately tent erected in the middle of the rest, about it was a large place much like to a Market, where the Courtiers are accustomed to walk, at the right hand is another very beautiful, where the Emperours Wives and Concubines dwell; at the top of the Princes tent is a Golden Cross with an Angel holding it in his left hand, with a drawn Cymeter in the right. The *Abuna* went to change his habit and put on another, according to the



the *Abyssin* custom. It is a very singular one, none but the High-Priest hath the liberty to wear it, for it is the badge or character by which he is distinguished from the other *Papa's* or Bishops of that Country, and from the rest of the Clergy, he was conducted next, to pay his respects to the Emperour, he was in the Kingdom of *Belegnaze* near a town very well peopled and scituated in a pleasant plain called *Ikroah*, about six leagues distant from the River *Tazassi*, I had the satisfaction to accompany the *Abuna*, for he was a man of a very mild and kind spirit, very pleasant in company, yet grave and serious, he was led by the Master of the Ceremonies into the Inner room where the Emperour lay upon a curious Bed of White Cotton Bed with a large fringe of Gold, behind him stood



stood his naked Sword, and round about were the Lords of his Privy Councel; above was a Canopy of cloath of Gold, with green silk interwoven, the room it self was hung with the same stufte; as soon as the *Abuna* enter'd the room he kneel'd three times on the ground, and then ascended the steps to the Bed to perform his respects; In the mean whiles the Emperour rose from his couch and half up embraced the *Abuna*, wishing him much felicity in his Empire, they discoursed some time together, and then he was dismiss with all honour and civility; the Emperour was pleased to take notice of his retinue, and particularly of my self. I was also admitted to the honour of kissing his Girdle, a ceremony only due to the Prince. I followed the *Abuna*, who received me into his own lodg.

lodgings, and would not suffer me  
whiles I was in that Country to be  
obliged to any other place for my  
retreat. Now I have brought  
my Reader into the Imperial tents  
of *Abassia*, it is convenient that we  
should take a view as from a high  
place of all the inferiour orders of  
men, and of all particulars which  
his curiosity may be inquisitive.  
And first

*Of the Emperour.*

**T**HE Emperour of the *Abys-*  
*sin* is a Prince highly hono-  
red of his subjects, because they  
fancy him to be lineally descend-  
ed from that noble and Religious  
King that first planted the Chri-  
stian Religion amongst them; and  
as they are extreamly devoted to  
it, so much, that they appear al-  
most extravagant in many of their  
pra-

practises, they have no small respect to his Posterity, who first brought them the advantage of the Christian Faith? None hath access to him of his subjects unless it be upon solemn occasions, but the chief Officers of his Crown, when he rides or is carryed abroad in a Royal Throne, all his people fall upon their knees and adore him; this throne is a kind of Sedan, but far more stately, with steps ascending to it made of wood gilt over, covered with Gold, it is carryed upon mens shoulders, or between four Horses, the Emperour appears in it with much state, and with more glory than in any other thing that I have seen; He never stirs out of his tents, but 600 men do follow him at his heels, they are his daily guard, they wear a Livery and a Habit distinct from all other people, on  
their

their head a Scarlet bonnet with three white plumes fastned behind with a blew cross on their shoulders, they have a very convenient Coat that comes down to their middle, with a Girdle or Sash, over it a Roman Mantle hangs, more proper for State than action, the colour is green, it is not very long, nor troublesome when they are obliged to make use of their hands; sometimes they ride, sometimes they go a-foot, as the Emperours occasion requires; for that purpose he hath always ready in his Stables great numbers of Horses. The Emperours Person is whiter than any of his Kingdom, for the *Abyssins* are tawny, a colour drawing near to black. I never saw any others of his Relations or kindred, but I hear they are all of the same colour. The people interpret this

to his advantage, that God by this  
 distinction, hath singled out that  
 Family that is to Reign amongst  
 them, out of which they always  
 choose their Emperour; their cu-  
 stom is, that he should never mar-  
 ry until he be crowned; then, with  
 the consent of his Nobles he chu-  
 seth two Wives out of his King-  
 dom, he entertains besides as ma-  
 ny Concubines as he pleaseth.  
 They are always with him in his  
 palaces with all their Attendants.  
 The first Male-child usually suc-  
 ceeds the Father in his Kingdom.  
 As soon as the children are named,  
 they are carried to a very delici-  
 ous place in the middle of a large  
 mountain called *Amarak*, where  
 a stately Castle is built encom-  
 passed with the River *Borohr*, and  
 fortified with a strong wall.  
 Here they are kept with the o-  
 ther precious things belonging to  
 the

the Emperour, they never go out unless it be in the Gardens and places of Recreation, with which this territory is abundantly furnished, and then they never lose the sight of their governours and guard; when the Father is dead the chief Officers of the Empire come to this place, and unless the eldest be incapable of the honour they take him to succeed in his Fathers room. If there be no Sons, the eldest Daughter takes the Scepter. During their Fathers life, they are kept here as in a *Scuola*, to learn all exercises proper to their Sex and age. They are taught the *Hebrew* and *Arabic* tongues, humane Philosophy and the Principles of Christian Religion. Here is for that purpose a large Library of above ten thousand Volumes all in Manuscript. Some told me that they had the



the most ancient Books of the world written by the *Egyptian* Sages in the time of *Moses*, by *Phanicians* afterwards, and by the Learned of all Ages. I saw some in the Library (into which I had the leave to enter) that were made of the *Egyptian* leaf called *Papyrus*, and others made of old Parchment that did bear the marks of antiquity. I ask'd the *Sabdi* an Officer that led me in to see the curiosities, how they did to preserve the Books so many years from consuming, he told me that they do usually transcribe them when the leaves are worn or likely to decay, and that for that intent there are twenty three Persons appointed with a good maintenance for them by the former Emperours; their employment is only to transcribe and copy out the books that age threa-



tens to spoil; they have not the  
 excellent use of Printing, for want  
 of communication with their *Euro-  
 pean* brethren. Hither are also sent  
 the chief Noblemens sons of the  
 Empire to keep company with the  
 Royal blood, and to receive with  
 them the instructions which this  
 place only affords, for here is  
 maintained a Learned Bishop  
 with several inferiour Priests that  
 have the charge of instructing and  
 tutoring the Children that are  
 committed to their custody. The  
 Bishop is Governor of the Castle,  
 and Overseer of the Diocess of  
 Kingdom of *Amara*, here is his Pa-  
 lace and place of abode, he sel-  
 dom stirs to Court. The Empe-  
 rour visits this place once a year  
 with his Wives. When he is cho-  
 sen, then all his brethren accom-  
 pany him to his Coronation; a  
 great solemnity in this place as well  
 as da

as amongst our Christian Princes,  
afterwards the Males are sent to  
govern Provinces, the Maids are  
disposed of in Mariage to Noble-  
men, who commonly expect this  
time as an opportunity to advance  
themselves by such an alliance.  
The Emperour is first crowned  
with thorns before he puts on the  
Imperial Diadem, in imitation of  
our Saviour, or to express the  
troublesome employment that he  
is to undertake. The *Abuna* puts  
both upon his head, in the place  
appointed for the devotions of the  
people, in the presence of all the  
Nobility of the Country. At that  
time the Prisons are opened, a  
thousand slaves are released at  
the Emperours charge, and the  
poor are relieved, actions that be-  
come a Christian Emperour, be-  
sides a great Feast is kept several  
days with all the splendor that

becomes so great a Prince, and  
 large a Fortune and great Reve-  
 nue. The present Emperour  
 name is *Abraham*, he is a young  
 man about thirty years of age, his  
 Meen is comely and pleasant, his  
 body is streight and tall, the fea-  
 tures of his face are very well  
 proportioned; so that he passed  
 for a great Beauty amongst them.  
 his eyes are quick and large, he  
 much delighted with the sport of  
 hunting the wild Beasts, for that  
 intent he keeps excellent Horses  
 and great Mastives that are fetcht  
 out of *Indostan* and *Arabia*; the  
 chief Officers that are near his  
 Person, are his *Bishur*, the Lieute-  
 nant General of his Armies; the  
*Zoroah*, the Treasurer and super-  
 intendant of his revenues; the  
*Bikir*, the grand Marshal of the  
 Kingdom who is also the su-  
 pream Judge of Affairs of conse-  
 quence

quence; the *Huloh*, the Secretary of State; *Diriharwah Negaz*, the Captain of the Guard, or preserver of the great Emperours Person; *Satyrbab* is the Chamberlain of his Household; the *Grasbun* is the keeper of his Horses; several other Officers are in his Court, whose names I omit; when they come to their Emperour they bow their knee three times to the ground. The Embassadors of the Infidels do never receive the honour of speaking to him, but they are dealt with by the mediation of some appointed for that purpose. The *Abuna* is much respected at Court; what he speaks, is received by all as a Law. The former Emperour was a man of War, but this is a Peace-maker to his own prejudice, and that of his Subjects. He hath this good quality, that he is severe against

all vices, against Swearing and Drunkennels, &c. He is fitter to sit upon a peaceable Throne than to govern one that hath so many watchful enemies about it as his hath. He is very inquisitive into all Affairs, he suffers none to be dispatcht without his knowledge. He is not easily over-ruled by Councel, but sticks fast to his own opinion and resolution, sometimes to his prejudice; he is very Religious, and a great observer of the Ceremonies of his Church, having all things that appear with the face of Innovation, by this means it happens that all about him look so serious in their Religious duties, and shew less profaness in their Practises, their Princes example encourages them. If any be named debauch'd, he is certain to be disgrac'd as soon as the fame hath reach'd his

Ma-

Masters ear. A great favourite  
 of the Emperour, one that attend-  
 ed on him continually, was su-  
 spected to have some familiarity  
 with anothers Wife, the suspici-  
 on was blown by some envious  
 persons into the Emperours ear,  
 who presently sent for him, and  
 dismissed him his service. This  
 good severity causeth his Laws  
 to be well obeyed. Did this  
 Emperour know as well how to  
 deal with his enemies, as he doth  
 know how to govern his Subjects,  
 he would be as much feared a-  
 broad as he is revered at home,  
 and all his Neighbours would  
 stand in aw of him. I doubt not  
 but the Empire of *Ethiopia* would  
 be again restored to its former  
 Greatness, could he but as well  
 manage a Sword as a Scepter. But  
 that weakness is to be attributed  
 to the manner and place of his  
 Educa-



Education, he hath been shut with-  
 in the narrow limits of a little  
 Territory unto which he did con-  
 fine his ambition when he was  
 produced in the world; his larger  
 fortune did not increase his pre-  
 tentions, but being content to  
 what he then enjoyed, the increase  
 was look'd upon as a superfluity,  
 besides this manner of Education  
 weakens the spirits that should  
 have a compass and a larger scope  
 to act than a narrow mountain or  
 a small Territory. He was there  
 so accustomed to a Pedantick life,  
 that he knew not how to handle  
 the helm of State, and act supream  
 in the business of the Empire.  
 His Governours I conceive did so  
 domineer over him, as it is their  
 custom, that he was ignorant in  
 any other thing but how to obey.  
 As therefore our Countryman  
*Machiavel* wisely advises, let the  
 Prince



Prince that is to succeed his Fa-  
 ther be nursed up in the Camp,  
 and in the midst of business a-  
 mongst men of courage and reso-  
 lution, that he may take impres-  
 sions sutable to the employment  
 he is to have in the world; for  
 were a Prince to judge of a propo-  
 sition of Divinity, or to compose  
 a piece of Latine or Greek, I  
 would then shut in the wandring  
 thoughts of his youth, and not  
 suffer them to see the world a-  
 broad: but seeing he is to com-  
 mand men, rather than Schollars;  
 and to compose those Affairs up-  
 on which depend his Subjects  
 quiet and happiness, I think it is  
 wisdom to train him up according-  
 ly, and let him see the face of  
 Souldiers as well as of Pedants, a  
 Gun and a Sword as well as  
 Books, that he may not only be  
 a Master, but a King. My business  
 is

is not to enlarge upon the manner  
 of Education proper to a Prince,  
 only I take notice of the defaults  
 I have mark'd in *Ethiopia* in the  
 bringing up their young Nobility,  
 and the Person that is to wear the  
 Crown, that if these Memoirs  
 have the happiness to fall into the  
 hands of any of our Princes of *I-*  
*taly*, they may not make their  
 Children so bookish that they may  
 not be able to handle a Sword.  
 This present Emperour of *Ethio-*  
*pia* is the most Learned of all his  
 Dominions, he speaks *Arabick*,  
*Persian*, *Hebrew*, and many other  
 Languages; he is read in Philo-  
 sophy, in Astrology: He is fitter  
 for contemplation than for action.

*Of the Imperial Court.*

**U**nder so Religious and Learned a Prince we may look for Courtiers of the same temper, for although some may follow their inclinations, it is common to see them frame themselves according to their Princes will and disposition. Never any Court was better modelled. *Solomon* from whom this Emperour gives out to have derived his Pedigree, did never order his Household in a more excellent manner. Every Officer is to be diligent in his place, if any be careless or corrupt, the *Sheirvabens*, the Comptrolers and Officers appointed to take notice of all misdemeanours, lesser offences are punished with the discredit of losing the place, greater with imprisonment and loss

loss of Estate and life. The *Neguz* himself is so severe, that lately at the request of his Mother he would not pardon a murderer, one of his Attendants, when he had killed a child of an Inferiour birth and Parentage, but caused him to be forthwith banished out of his Territories.

Besides the Bishops that wait upon the Court, here are ten Chaplains, Ministers of the Inferiour Orders of the Clergy, who do on the Sabbath day expound before the Emperour in their turns, some Text of Scripture according to the ancient manner of the *Jews* who had their Synagogues, where the Law was read and explained to the people every week. The Saturday is the day appointed in this place for publick Devotion. The manner observed at that time, I shall set down

down in its place ; all Orders of men do resort to their Churches to assist in the service of God.

In the Court are entertained all the Princes sons that have any dependency upon this Empire ; when they come of age whiles they are young , they are kept in the Castle of *Amara* , and there brought up with the young Emperor ; a policy not unuseful to this State , for by this means they are taught betime to know and respect their future Prince , and when they are of age to manage and govern the Affairs of their several jurisdictions ; they are more faithful to his interest , for whom they have had a kindness from their Infancy , for nothing nourishes love so much as an early acquaintance ; and nothing lays a better foundation to a sincere friendship and loyalty , as a familiarity

liarity from their tender years. They are there taught to honour and respect the Emperours Children, and he is also obliged to a loving correspondency with them. But as soon as they come of age, the Emperor calls them to Court, and there they are further instructed and tutored before he commits unto them their Fathers Estates and Kingdoms. This obliges also the Parents to stick close to the Emperour, for their sons are as pledges in His Court of their fidelity and obedience.

The Emperour is not to dwell in any house, nor to make any long residence in any Town, for they look upon it as beneath his Grandeur to be confined within the Walls of any habitation; and they judge it not consistant with the benefit of the publick, that one place should constantly enjoy him;



him ; therefore it is provided by the Statute Law of that Nation, that the Prince shall never stay above four days in any Town, for that reason , when he hath been beaten by his Neighbours, he shut not up himself in Cities or Fortresses, but saved himself into the remotest and Desart places, where none did offer to seek him out, or to adventure themselves but the wild beasts. The people of the Country that hold from him all their Lands and Tenements, do never suffer him to be long in that distress, but they flock about him out of a fear to lose the right or privileges of his protection ; so that if he loseth one battel and his people be destroyed whiles there are any remaining in the Land, he is able to make a head against the enemy, for all are obliged in such cases to appear in

E

Arms



Arms from sixteen years old to sixty, unless sickness doth furnish them with any reasonable excuse.

There is one practice remarkable in this Court, every morning all the Officers of the *Niguz* do pay their respects unto him about eight a clock, not to his Person but to something that represents it. In the Anti-Chamber of the Emperour is a couch of State standing under a glorious Canopy upon three steps above the couch is a Golden Scepter richly set with precious Stones and Pearls, it commonly leans against the hanging of the room. Before this empty seat are always waiters to observe all that omit to pay their daily homage. It is the duty of every one to present himself, and kneel three times to the ground before it every morning whether the Emperour be there or not.

The

The *Abyssins* never stir their hats, nor discover their heads, but in the Churches at their devotions, then they observe the practice of all other Christians. Lesser civilities are paid only with a bow of the body, and an inclination of the head, holding the right hand close to the breast; greater respects are expressed with the bow of the knee, the kissing of the girdle or the thigh, and of the ground upon which the person that we intend to honour walks.

Women are rarely seen amongst the men at Court, they have a private place unto which none is admitted but the *Abuna*, and some of the most Religious Persons. They have Eunuchs that wait upon them, usually Blacks; they appear at the Churches, but in a place separated from the rest. Sometimes when the Emperour

will shew his Grandeur and happiness to his Courtiers, he sends for his Chief Queen, who must appear in all the State and Glory that her Industry or Beauty can produce, she is received by the Emperour with some expressions of kindness, and then she is admitted to sit down on his right hand, for the left is the place of honour in *Abassia*.

Once every year he hath a great Feast kept at Court, with wonderful expressions of joy, it is the day of the Emperours Birth. It is the custom that the *Negus* should give entertainment to all that will be pleased to accept of his kindness, he is the next day after requited with Presents of the most considerable Persons of his Court.

This Imperial Court is never fixed in any one place, but Marches

ches with the Emperour, about 6000 Tents do always pitch about him, in such an excellent order, that in a moment, from the farthermost tent one may come to that of the great *Neguz*, where a strong guard watches about his Person day and night. The Soldiers of the Kings guard are very neatly attired, and well furnished with Bows and Guns; they are mixed at present, since the use of Powder was introduced amongst them by the *Portugueses*.

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*Of the Government.*

**T**He Emperour hath several great Kingdoms that acknowledge his jurisdiction, and seven or eight crowned heads that are under him; His name is *Giann*

*Belus*, that is, *Precious Giam* or *John*, a name of the same signification as *Illustrious Serenus*, Excellent, &c. Titles that we give to our Princes. When he writes, this is his stile,

*In the name of God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, of things visible and invisible, in the name of God the Son Jesus Christ, who is the same with the Father from the beginning of the world, Light of Light, true God of true God, and in the name of God the Holy Spirit, who is also a living God proceeding from the Father.*

This Letter you shall receive from a mighty King, whose name the Lions do respect, by the grace of God I am call'd *Athani Tinghib*; that is, the Incense of the Vir-

Virgin, the son of *K. David*, the son  
 of *Salomon*, the Son of the King  
 by the hand of *Mary*, the Son of  
*Naw* according to the flesh, & the  
 son of *S. Peter*, & *S. Paul*, according  
 to grace, the beloved of God, the  
 Pillar of the Faith, who hath ta-  
 ken upon him the name of *Abra-*  
*ham* Emperour of the Great and  
 upper *Ethiopia*, and of large  
 Kingdoms and dominions, King  
 of *Xoa*, of the *Casates*, of *Fatigar*, of  
*Angote*, of *Baru*, of *Baliganze*, of  
*Adca*, of *Vangue*, of *Goiame*, where  
 is *Nilus* source of *Damaraa*, of  
*Vaguemedri*, of *Ambea*, of *Vagne*, of  
*Tigremahon*, of *Sabaym*, the Coun-  
 try of the Queen of *Saba*, of *Ba-*  
*magaes*, and Supream Lord as far  
 as *Nubia* that confines upon *E-*  
*gypt*, &c. Many Titles and King-  
 doms are heapt together to ex-  
 press his Grandeur, at present he  
 enjoys but the Titles alone of



many of those Kingdoms, while others do eat up the reversion, eleven or twelve of them do remain faithful to him, sometimes the Inhabitants are disturbed by their war-like Neighbours, but they could never be subdued by any other Prince, for his sake they endure the loss of their Goods, Estates, Children, and oft times they are driven into extream Poverty, because they cannot leave their lawful Prince; but they must also renounce Religion with him before they can be accepted of by their enemies.

This consideration ties them fast to the *Neguz* interest, and obliges them to be most faithful unto him notwithstanding all their losses.

The Government of this Great Prince is partly Arbitrary, and partly Subject to the written  
Laws



Laws that are contained in two Volumes, written as they say by the Apostles themselves. The first they call *Manida*, the other they name *Abethilis*, they comprehend the Rules of Government, relating to right or wrong; they further observe much of the politick Law of *Moses*, which he commanded the *Jews*. In those other occasions of which these Books are silent, the Emperours or the Judges pleasure and reason passeth for a Law. The first Books called *Manida* and *Abethil*, are full of most excellent Rules and Statutes. Some wise man of that Empire composed them for to direct the Prince in the execution of his Office: and that they might receive more credit, he caused it to be bruited abroad, that these books had been found in the ruines of the Church where *St. Lycanon*, who was

was sent into *Ethiopia* by St. *Philip* the Apostle, did teach and that they had been composed by the Disciples of our Saviour assembled together in a general Council. Assoon as this religious lye had been divulged, every one was desirous to see and hear the Contents of this Book, when they saw therefore that the matter was answerable to the fame of it, they began really to credit it, so that they do as religiously obey the commands of these Books as the Gospels, and the word of God. When the Emperour dines or sups, some small portion of it is read before him after the Musick, which in this country is very pleasant and grateful to the ear, more than in any other place out of *Italy*, although the instruments upon which they play be not like ours.

The

The Emperour hath one Judge called *Bikir* over all his dominions, to judge of matters of right or wrong, under him are the *Sudbric's*, provincial Judges that are to give up an account of their actions to him, they are often removed at the least complaint, and others placed in their rooms. It is a great disgrace to receive a bribe, they all do follow the dictates of reason in pronouncing their sentences, in proportioning the penalties according to the nature and hainousness of the offences. These Judges have only a power over the people, the Clergy and Monks have other Officers and Superintendants that do judge of their matters.

Besides these inferiour Judges, every other year the grand Marshal or Supream *Bikir* sends men into several Provinces to hearken after

after the behaviour, and examine the deportment of the Judges. If any be found guilty of any crime, he is severely punished and shamefully thrust out of his Office with a mark of Infamy, that renders him incapable of having any publick employment in this Country. Such seldom remain there long, for the shame and obloquy of the people forces them to be gone and seek other habitations in a remote Country. The *Bikir* hath also his Lieutenants, like unto our Colonels, disposed of in all the dominions of grand *Neguz*, each Lieutenant gives him account of all the men he is able to provide for the service of the Prince in case of necessity, and he governs the people, keeps all things in order, assists the *Bikir* and all his inferiour Officers in the execution of their Offices, when they

they are requir'd, for that purpose, they have so many men ready upon all occasions to obey their orders; these receive a continual salary from the Emperour, although they are otherwise employed in several Trades. At the least summons they assemble at the Rendezvous, and follow their Leaders, who by this means keep all the Country in awe, and appease the tumults and disorders that may happen amongst a mixed multitude.

In the time of the Wars, these Lieutenants of distinct places gather their men together at the place appointed, and then march with them according to order, usually to the place where the great *Neguz* is himself, to guard and defend his Person. They carry with them their Provisions and Victuals proportionable to the time appoint-

appointed for them to stay in Arms. These officers have places allotted to them for their maintenance by the Emperour, who is Lord and sole owner of all the Land within his great Empire. All the people are but his slaves, their substance and goods are his when he will require them; unto persons more eminent than the rest he appoints certain Lands and places for to recompence them for the pains they take in his service. All the people pay the tenth part of all fruits to the King, that Revenue belongs to the Crown: they always pay the tribute and taxes in the Commodities of the Country, in Salt, Gold, Silver, Corn, Hides, Elephants Teeth, the horn of the *Rhinocerot*, slaves and such like.

Now this manner of Government is only in the Territories;  
more



more immediately subject to the *Neguz*, the others, where tributary Kings do Reign, are not thus subject to his power; the Kings give no account of their actions to him, or to his Officers, but play the sovereigns in all their jurisdictions, causing money to be stamp'd in their names, tributes and customs to be levyed according to the publick wants, disposing of all offices and places within their territories at their will.

Of late they have brought in stamped Coin, which before was not known in this Empire. The name and titles of the *Neguz* is Printed in one side, and a large Cross on the other, with some Characters signifying that he is a defender of the Cross. There are yet some little pieces of Gold, Brass and Iron, with Pepper, and all other Merchandises, that serve  
instead



instead of Coin in the places far from the Imperial Court, and where Coin cannot so easily be obtained nor made. Those that are found guilty of crimes, are not ordinarily punished with death (they use to deprive them for their offences of some of their Limbs) of their eyes, hands, or feet, forcing them to a continual sufferance the rest of their days. If any commit sacrilege, he is burnt without mercy in the fire, and those that murder, by their Law are to lose their lives, unless the Prince will mitigate the punishment by a perpetual prison or banishment.

In the *Manda* are several penal Statutes, amongst the rest, that if a Priest be guilty of any crime, as of murder, of perjury, adultery, &c. he is to be punished in the same manner as the rest of the  
 peo-

people, that he is to be called before the common Judge after that the Bishop hath notice of the fact, and that both together are to pronounce the sentence that he deserves without any mercy.

It is commanded in that book, that all, both Secular and Ecclesiastick persons are to abstain from all carnal Copulation during the space of twenty four hours next immediately before they enter into the Churches.

There is in it a very wholesome Law that concerns the good of the publick: It is that two times every year there shall be an Assembly called of the most Reverend and Eminent Persons of the Nation to consult of the Affairs of the Church, and establish Laws according to the occasions and times. That then the *Abuna* shall sit as President with the Empe-  
P
rours

roure chief Judge, and that of the Clergy and Fryers, there shall be called out of all parts to make Decrees for the good of the Empire.

Adulterers are punished with death in this manner. The Man and the Woman are stript naked and ty'd up by the legs to some high tree, where they are to remain to feed the Fowl of the air, until their bones and flesh fall to the ground. It is no less than death to touch them, or to offer to shew favour to their dead Carcasses. By this exemplary punishment of these offenders, men grow more wary how they venture to defile their Neighbours Bed, and Women are not so free of their Tails as amongst our jealous *Italians*. Men in this Country pretend not so much Courtship and Gallantry, and Women dare

dare not countenance the declarations or passion of a secret Lover. Custom here teaches women as much privacy as in any other place, but not with that strictness that might render them ridiculous, but they abuse it not as other people do, the better to hide their foul actions, and the meetings of their Gallants. There is more innocency in the behaviour of the women; as much modesty, but less craft and subtilty; as much freedom, but little debauchery.

Murder is no less hateful in this place, it hath a punishment allotted to it no less grievous: The murderer that knew how to destroy others, is forced to destroy himself also; in this manner a Sword is put into his hands, and he is laid upon a large piece of Iron flat, as long and as broad as a mans body, it is supported with

four feet under it, a gentle flame is entertained that heats it, and puts him by degrees to cruel torments, the pain & rage forces him to thrust the weapon into his own bowels, by that means to deliver himself from the unmerciful fury of the fire, and abridge his tortures. This kind of death is practised in *Tigremahon* and *Angote*, in other places, the murder is executed in another manner, they flea him alive, and cut his eye lids, and then they expose him to the Sun in that raw condition in some eminent place, rubbing him over with honey to invite the Bees and Wasps to feed upon him. This kind of death is the most inhumane that I ever beheld. The pain is both grievous and tedious, death creeps upon them by degrees, and suffers them not to die till they have endured a world of misery.

The

The Noblemen and Grandees of the Court that offend the *Neguz*, or commit any other crime worthy of death, are not executed in the common manner, nor in the usual places appointed for that purpose. There is in the Kingdom of *Damut* a high Mountain naturally well fortified with a steep ridge of hills on every side, a narrow passage leads up to the top, where a Castle is erected kept by the Souldiers of the *Neguz* guard. There all noble men are brought that venture to break the Laws of the Land, or to displease their Sovereign Lord. The Territorie round about is very barren, and the place extream cold most part of the year, whether it be the nature of the Soil, or the elevation of the Mountain into the second Region of the Air, none could tell me, but here these Per-



sons of Quality are furnished to death, imprisoned, and put to suffer several other sorts of punishments according to the pleasure of the *Neguz*. This place is very convenient for that purpose, for the Friends and Acquaintance of the offenders cannot come to learn the miseries that they endure, nor the cruelties that they suffer; which if they did know, might oblige them to a revenge, or ill will against their Emperours.

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*Of several Customs of the Abyssins.*

**T**He Emperour and people have so great a respect for the Churches, that they never ride by them upon their Horses, as soon as they come within a hundred paces, they alight and walk a foot bowing at the publick places



ces of their Devotion, in honour of that great God that hath named them his Houses of Prayer, as they pass by.

When the Emperour makes any progress far from the usual place of Residence, certain Religious men do carry before him upon their shoulders, a banner with some pious representation in it, with an Altar or Table of Stone, upon which they use to Celebate their Communion, before them marcheth a fellow with a Censer in one hand, and a little Bell in the other, at the sound of it the horsemen come down, the people stand by, and all do prepare themselves to let their Prince pass.

They never use to send their thoughts one to another in writing, but by messengers, either out of ignorance or superstition, for they fancy the use of writing so

sacred, that they will not profane it in ordinary business, because God hath been pleased to commit his Holy Word in writing; yet of late, seeing the inconveniencies their scrupulous fancies have reduced them to, they have made use of writing in several occasions, as in Registring the Affairs of the Kingdoms, in setting down the expences, disbursements and Receipts of the Emperours Revenues, &c. But the characters are distinct from those of the Bible, or of their Sacred Books. And when the Emperour sends an Embassador, he then dispatches with him some Credential Letters.

They are not to make Wine but by stealth, none but the *Abuna* and the King may cause the Grapes to be strained; for they are afraid that if Wine did grow common, it would introduce much  
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debauchery and many disorders, which could not find a remedy. They do not forbid it out of superstition as the *Turks*, but for some politicke considerations that Wine may not grow so common amongst them, that they might neglect the other drinks which encourage Husbandry, for they use a sort of drink made of a leaf which they sow, it is of a pleasant taste, much like unto old *Mede*, a drink made of Honey. They drink also water steeped with Barley, & other Grains. The Emperour and the *Abuna* have liberty to drink and make Wine by their Laws. All the Wine of this Country is very black, but a great Cordial, it burns not so much the stomach as others do in hot places, but cherisheth and refresheth the body.

The towns in this Country are not numerous, in Houses they seldom

dom contain above 2000. I never  
 saw a walled City, some Castles  
 of late have been built for plea-  
 sure rather than for defence.

Their houses are but mean and  
 low, covered with a thick thatch,  
 their beds are Hides tied up at the  
 four corners. They eat upon cou-  
 ches, with a little round and low  
 table placed before them that sup-  
 ports a large dish; they have some  
 Vessels made of earth of a shining  
 black very beautiful, these are  
 their cups to drink; of late they  
 have the use of Gold and Silver  
 in their houses.

They have several sorts of  
 weapons, short Lances, Swords,  
 Bows and Arrows without Fea-  
 thers, Helmets and Head-pieces;  
 they have got some field Guns  
 purchased from Merchants at an  
 extraordinary rate, to encourage  
 them to import more.

The

The *Abyssins* are natural lyars and deceivers, they seldom speak truth when they swear, unless they be brought to take a solemn Oath, or be forced to swear by the Head of their *Neguz*, or be scared with the thoughts of Excommunication, for they apprehend that above all corporal punishments.

This is their manner of administering an Oath, the party that is to swear follows two Priests to the Church-door, they carry before him Fire and Incense, as soon as the party comes, the Priests cause him to lay his hand on the door, saying unto him these words: *If thou swear an untruth, as the Dragon devourerh the beasts of the Forrest, so let the infernal Devils devour thee, as the Grapes are bruised in the Wine-press, so let them bruise thy body, and as the fire consumeth the wood, so let thy soul for ever burn*  
in

*in hell.* The party that sweareth answers to every one of these imprecations *Amen.* But if thou speak the truth, let thy life be prolonged with honour, and thy soul at last be received into heaven; and again he answereth *Amen,* which being ended, he tells what he knows of the business required from him.

They have not the liberty to kill an Ox without the Governours leave, although it belong to them, for they are careful to preserve Cattel in that place from the excess of Luxury; here are no shambles therefore in the towns, as in *Europe*; their ordinary victuals are Mutton, Herbs, Fruit, Fowl, wild Beasts, and such like. The wild Goats do increase here in such a manner, especially near the Mountains, that they eat up all the Corn and Grass, other wild things



things are here in great numbers; they do not therefore suffer their tame Cattel to be destroyed (whiles they have so many wild, that they threaten the Fruits of the earth with destruction) to encourage the hunting of them, they forbid the ordinary use of Beef. This Inland people is naturally of a lazy disposition, they have therefore many Laws to quicken them, and oblige them to labour and provide for their own preservation. As the not killing of their Oxen without License, the refusing alms to beggars, they are not to suffer any in the Kingdoms of the *Neguz* that will not work, unless they be so sick and maimed, that they are not able to help themselves, then the Religious houses do administer comfort to them, for they are endowed for that purpose with many Lands and Reversions.

The



The *Abyssins* are very devout in all holy duties, & in holy places they pay unto them a great respect, they'l neither spit nor sit down in their Churches, nor suffer any Dogs nor Cats, nor any other unreasonable creature to enter into them ; but instead of seats, they use Crutches very conveniently made to lean upon. At the Church door there stands a multitude of them, every one takes his own, and draws as near the Preacher as possible he can. They perform their prayers sitting, confess their sins standing, hear the expositions and Lectures of the Bible leaning.

They often use washing, especially before prayer, they wash face, hands and feet, for they love to appear before Almighty God with decency, they will not touch any unclean or dead thing, and if they

they do by chance, they dare not present themselves in their Churches till they have made use of washing.

Their women are employed about all servile work, but are not reduced to that slavery as other women, their Neighbours amongst the *Moors* and *Gentiles*. The ordinary work of those that necessity constrains not to be industrious, is to spin Silk and Cotton to make the excellent stuffs that come from thence and the *East Indies*.

Their Marriages are very pleasant, before the door of the bridegroom a bed is prepared according to his estate, then come three Priests with a silver Cross which they lay upon it, followed by the Bridegroom, Bride, and all their Friends; they altogether walk three times about the bed, crying Allelujah, and then they command

mand the young couple to sit down, cutting off a Lock of the head of the Bridegroom, and another of the Bride, which they sprinkle in water sanctified, then they tell the Bridegroom, laying their hands upon his head, do that which God hath commanded in his Gospel, and think now that you are not two but one flesh, which is no sooner said, but they all depart, and a tent being erected about the bed, they presently obey the Commandment. Then follows a three days Feast, where all magnificence is expressed amongst the great ones.

*Polygamy* is permitted and much practised amongst them, but those that wait upon their Churches; or that perform any office in them, are by no means suffered to have two Wives, whosoever of the Clergy keepeth a Concubine or

two Wives, is degraded *ipso facto*, and loseth his title to all Spiritual promotion or employment in the Church, thereby they recommend a greater degree of abstinence from fleshly lusts to men of the Holy function, than to others; they require them to live according to the strictest rules of Christianity, and to be exemplary in their conversations,

They have another frequent abuse in the matter of Marriage, they do grant unto the woman a Letter of divorce upon slight occasions: But the Priests do not approve of this practice, therefore they provide against it as much as lies in their power; they lay upon that person that shall break first the Marriage-bond a grievous penalty, or a curse to oblige the parties for fear of being liable unto it, to be faithful and constant to

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one another. Nevertheless the great ones many times find severall pretences to excuse their dissoluty, and to procure a separation when they do not agree. Among them it is also lawful to marry the Brothers Wife, if she be Childless according to the Law of Moses; but this is only practised by the Grandees. The other sort of people are more Christian in their customs, they suffer not any to marry before the age of 18. the reason they give of this Law, is that by early Marriages nature is brought to decay, which they labour to hinder, by appointing a moderate age capable of the trouble and inconveniencies of the estate. They fore-see also that if Marriage were permitted before it would both lessen and weaken the next Generation of men.

There

There are here two sorts of Religious men, the Priests whose business is to teach and instruct the people, whereof some are dispersed all over the Country, having their particular precincts; the other live together in a Fellowship and Society in Buildings appointed for that purpose; the chief business of these is to Visit the sick, provide for the poor, and perform charitable deeds. The other sort of Religious men are Monks and Fryers, that live a retired life, as the *Anachorets* did; for that intent they have Covents built at some places distant from the towns, upon delicate Mountains, and in pleasant Valleys. Neither of these sort of people are useless in that Empire, they are not to beg as our Fryers in *Italy* and *Spain*, they have no need of it, for the former Emperours have appointed a con-

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considerable Revenue, and great territories to the maintenance of these Houses, and of their owners besides, they have the liberty to traffick and increase their Riches, every one hath a trade to employ himself, some spend their life in Contemplation, and in discovering those things and Secrets that may be for the publick benefit, others do till their own ground, sow, reap and dress their Gardens.

These places were not first founded in vain, they were for the benefit of the publick, especially of Strangers and Pilgrims that are there to be received and entertained without any charge to them. And if any were become an extravagant in wasting his Estate, it was laid up for him in these Religious Houses, and employed to the best advantage by these Fryers. But that the

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Revenue may never be wasted, they are never to marry whiles they remain in the Covent, if the fancy of marrying seizeth upon any man, he is to depart with a small portion, and to dispose of himself at his own pleasure. These men live such pleasant lives, that none can think of marrying whiles he remains amongst them; they have plenty of all things provided for them, brought out of all parts of the world by means of their traffick; they have excellent company among themselves, free from all troubles of the world. Some time they spend in their devotions morning and evening, they are constantly together at their Church-offering, their prayers to Almighty God for the Emperours person, and the Empire. The rest of their time they spend in the improvement of their talents, and

in their several affairs for the benefit of their Covent; they do not weary themselves late in their works, but at a convenient hour towards the evening they repair to their lodgings, and there take together such civil Recreations as an innocent and retired life will afford. I look upon the condition of these men the most happy in the world, they are neither burthened with commands, nor vexed with taxes, nor disturbed with suits in Law, nor tormented with the cares of this world, nor consumed with the unlawful pleasures of it, nor disquieted with many miscarriages which do naturally attend men of business; but here they live neither idle nor useless, but having employed themselves moderately, they have time to revive their spirits with some Recreation. If there be a Paradise on earth

earth, I think it is in *Ethiopia* amongst these Monks and Fryers, they are so far from begging, that at solemn times of the year, at the Nativity of our Saviour, at Easter, Pentecost, *Michaelmas*, and the birth-day of the Emperour, they send their liberalities to all the poor people round their Covents, especially to those that are burthened with numbers of Children, and have nothing to make them subsist but their daily labour, Were our Fryers, our Franciscans, Mendicants, and the other Orders of Religious men of this disposition in his Holiness dominions, the people would honour and respect them, and they would gain much credit to the Roman Church by such practices, and to themselves, These Fryers that are thus retired out of the great concourse of the towns and people, are of several

fraternities, some are called the  
 Moncks of St. *Anthony*, these are  
 the most numerous. Their found-  
 der was an *Anachores* of *Egypt* that  
 spent his latter days in the desert  
 places in tilling and dressing the  
 ground. He drew unto him such  
 numbers of people that were wea-  
 ry with the toil and troubles of  
 the great world, that he saw ma-  
 ny thousands imitate his example  
 before he dyed. The other fra-  
 ternities are those of St. *Paul*, of  
 St. *Macarius*, whose employment  
 is the same with the Moncks of St.  
*Anthony*, they differ only in their  
 names. In every Covent they e-  
 lect every year a Superintendant  
 whom they call *Loucan*; he is  
 to keep good orders, and to an-  
 swer all the miscarriages that are  
 committed by the Society, if he  
 allows of them.

These

These blessed places are to pay no Revenue to the Emperour, but of their prayers. All other Lands are at his disposal by the Statutes of the Empire, he is the Lord of them, but these that belong to the Fryers are none of his, and free from all impositions. So are all the other Lands and places that belong to the Clergy; for we may take notice that the tythes of all things belonging to the Emperor, the Clergy and those that attend in the worship of God have a maintenance appointed unto them out of certain Lands and territories which they must see manured as well as the rest of the people do theirs, for they receive little or no benevolence from the Country, they depend not upon them for their maintenance: so that by that means they are highly honoured of all men, and beloved because they

they rather give to them, than take from them; and although they are well rewarded for their pains from the Lands allotted to them, their good Offices look as favours and kindnesse done to the people, because nothing proceeds from their labours or Estates to reward the Priests instructions and Attendance.

The Churches are separated into three distinct places or rooms according to the manner of the *Jews*. At the entrance of the Temple, about six paces there is a Curtain drawn that makes the first separation, every body may go into the Church, but none but those that have been sanctified by the *Abuna* have liberty to go into that place, and pass the first Curtain. This was wisely enacted to oblige all the Nobility and Persons of Quality to receive that benefit



pestic from the High-Priest, and by that means to endear him unto them. Next to this place before the Altar-table, is drawn another Curtain, beyond which none hath liberty to pass but the Priests themselves when the Communion is administred. These curtains are drawn, but the people keep themselves in their several distinct places until the time of the Communion.

The Churches are very neatly adorned with Pictures, which these people do not worship, but only as Ornaments to their Religious Houses, they place them there. The Churches are built of Lime and Stone, which they use not in their common buildings, for they think it decent that the places set apart for the Service of God should have no common materials. None therefore but some select



his houses of the Emperour are built in this manner, and with the same substance.

When the Priest hath lost his Wife by death, he may not marry again unless he wil lose the power of exeouting his function, yet the Patriarch may give a License to marry again, but without that License it is altogether unlawful.

They bury their dead with the greatest ceremony imaginable, they cloath them in all their most gaudy attire, and carry them in a Chair with their faces and hands uncovered, if the dead hath been a Souldier, he hath the honour to go armed into the grave; before, march the Priest and the Religious men, saying some good sentences, advising the people to prepare to depart; then comes the Corps seated in his Chair of State.

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trimed with Garlands and Flowers, and with some white Feathers, if he be young, with yellow if he be of a middle age, and with black if he be old. The sight is so pleasant, that it would almost give every one a mind to be in the room of the dead; the Parents follow with a badge of mourning upon their heads, a handful of ashes, the next come their friends and acquaintance; thus they proceed to the Grave in order, where the first ch. of the Gospel of S. *John* is read, & the noble Actions & vertues of the dead are rehearsed, all hearing with much devotion, then the Priest as they put the body in the Grave pronounceth these words, *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* The next day they give alms, and send gifts to their friends in the name of the deceased, and bring upon his Grave a banquet  
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according to the Quality of the  
Persons. And every day for a  
moneth they continue to vifit the  
Sepulchre of the dead, and to of-  
fer up some prayers for him to  
Almighty God, for they imagine  
something of purgatory, and of  
the unfezled estate of the Soul im-  
mediately after its departure out  
of this life, which obliges them to  
intreat for them, that they may  
enter into the joys of the blef-  
fed.

**THE**



THE  
DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
Several Kingdoms Subject  
TO THE  
NEGUZ.

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*Of Barnagasso.*

**T**His Kingdom is as fruitful  
as it is large and popu-  
lous: It is limited on the  
South by a pleasant River called  
*Abagni*, that discharges it self into  
*Nilu*, on the West it hath an  
Island

Island called by the Inhabitants *Sonhador*, by our people *Gweyter*, which Island the River *Nilus* formeth as it runs through *Ethiopia* towards *Egypt*; on the North is the Kingdom of *Dafila*, and on the East the Red Sea, where there is a very convenient Port for Ships, now possessed by the *Turks* and *Moors* called *Eragacca*. This Kingdom is full of little towns, the most considerable places are *Finash*, *Carno*, *Timei*, *Bara*, *Barvo*; there is over it a Lord or a King that commands in chief, and hath it by inheritance, he that is there now is called *Ishmael*, he pays tribute both to the *Turks* and to the *Negus*; the Country abounds in Silk, Cloath of Silver that is made by the Inhabitants, and in Cottons. It is fruitful, of Dates, Pomgranates, Peaches, Apricocks, Corn of all sorts, especially Oats, the people  
 make

make of it a drink very pleasant. Here are also many Vineyards, the Wine they make by stealth, as in other places of the dominions of the *Neguz*.

The Country is for the most part Champaign, unless it be towards the Red sea, there a ridge of hills stretches it self all along the Coast and encloseth many lakes and pools of water enriched with excellent fish, that which is called *Mazamo*, is the most considerable because of its pleasant situation that hath invited thither many Religious men that have planted upon the sides of it six Monasteries. It lyeth convenient for trade, for near unto it is the Red sea, from whence these holy *Anachorets* do fetch their Merchandise, to convey them to the rest of the Kingdom; and because they border upon the *Moors*, they

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pay unto them a yearly tribute to have the liberty of passing through their territories unmolested by their means, the Kingdom receives a considerable benefit; they have great numbers of Males, Asses, Camels, Rhinocerots, Elephants especially in the Mountains where these creatures are wild.

There is one thing very remarkable in the mountains near a little town called *Abbarah*, is a large fountain of such strange nature, that whatsoever is cast into it, turns within a days time into a hard stone, whether it be Wood, Flesh, Earth, or any other substance.

And not far from it at certain times, amongst the common people it is reported, that there are appearances in the mountains very dreadful, when I passed by that place my curiosity carryed me to

it;



it; I did really hear strange voices and names in the air, but saw nothing, but I did attribute the cause to the wind, and the disposition of the mountains that are so placed, that when a strong gale blows upon the Rocks there are unusual names heard; the wind strikes also through several Caves, and at the entry many shrieks and cries are heard, so that the Country people dare not adventure in to know the cause of them. The vulgar opinion is, that this place leads into hell, and that the Souls of the damned tormented in these lower-parts of the earth, do send up here their complaints. I did visit these Caves, near them none would come with me for fear of mischief. I perceived the cause of the wonder, and did discover it to some of the Fryers, but their ignorance and superstition would never

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believe me; from their infancy they had been bred up with an apprehension of these dark Caves, which no reason could possibly remove from them: I went to see all the curiosities of this Country with my guard, being accompanied by some Persons belonging to the Emperours Court, they led me into a deep valley, where we heard nine Eccho's or returns of our voices one after another. At the end of it near a large fountain, the ground being very stony, we found several slates very white that had Images of Beasts and men imprinted in them in a blew character, so perfectly, that no hand could ever paint them better.

Nature sometimes delights to shew her Industry or Art amongst the most contemptible trifles, and to cast her Gold and Pearls in  
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vessels and places not answerable to the price of these things. The Prince of this Kingdom received us with much civility, but not with more State than is proper to such remote and barbarous people. The *Abuna* made his progress all over his Diocese, he visited the Court of this King amongst the rest, and in his company I went to see much of *Ethiopia*, he had a traine suitable to his estate, several of the *Grandeess* out of curiosity did accompany us; His business was in every place to see to the behaviour of the Clergy, to appoint Bishops careful of the Publick Interest, and to look that they that were already appointed might do their office without respect of persons: He displaced three during our progress, and establish'd others in whom he confided; they were

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the Bishops of *Balgada*, of *Abagna*, and *Fungi*, men that had not behaved themselves well in their function.

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*Of the Kingdom of Tigremahon.*

**I**T is the best territory of *Naguz*, but much ruined by the Wars of the *Turk*, it is watered with many little Rivers that run into *Nilus*, so that all the Summer it yields a pleasant Prospect, and as great advantage to the Inhabitants, for in most places they reap two Crops of every thing that is sown or planted: It contains about sixty leagues in length, from the River *Nilus* to *Darngali*, and thirty in breadth. The Emperour lives here for the most part, and therefore he appoints Governours over several places of it. Three Provinces

ces it contains, *Sabami*, *Torrates*,  
*Balgada*; In that of *Sabami* are se-  
 veral Mines of Gold, out of which  
 the *Neguz* digs five Millions of  
 Dollars every year; over this  
 Province is a *Sebesb*, a Governour  
 that takes care to gather the Em-  
 perours Revenue, and to keep  
 good order in every place: It is  
 not so fruitful as the other Pro-  
 vinces, but in recompence, it fur-  
 nishes a great quantity of  
 that Rich Metal that others do  
 want. This place is said to be the  
 country of the Queen of *Saba* that  
 visited *Solomon*; the *Abyssins* do  
 tell many stories of her Voyage to  
*Jerusalem*, and of her return that  
 caused all the Kingdoms that ac-  
 knowledged her jurisdiction to  
 become *Jews*.

In this Kingdom was a famous  
 City called *Caxumo*, it was the  
 Metropolis of all *Ethiopia*, but it  
 hath

hath been mightily ruined by the Wars, so that at present it shews but a few houses that serve to receive Shepherds and Graziers, for here is abundance of Cattel of all sorts, round about stand many old Ruines over-grown with herbs, but yet they declare the importance and greatness of the City that did give Laws to this part of the Country, although it is so near the line the air is very temperate, not so much by reason of the continual brises that blow very fresh from three a clock till the afternoon, as because of the abundance of fresh water Springs that are very cold in the hottest time of Summer. Near this City is a fountain that contains much water, but never yields any until the Beasts do come to drink, and when they do approach it flows over, and gives a very plentiful stream  
of



of clear water very grateful to the Palate. We had here a sight of a strange sort of a Cat, about the bigness of a Leopard, the Inhabitants do use the dung in many sort of medicines, and to dye their Cloath and Cottons in blew. It is not so fierce as other beasts of that bigness, but extream fearful, it keeps for the most part in inaccessible mountains and Rocks, and seldom adventures it self in the plain Country, although it runs as swift as any creature I have seen. Here are also great quantity of Rhinocerots, Tygers, Leopards, Wolts, &c. for here are many Woods that serve for a retreat to these furious kinds of creatures.

I must not omit a memorable story that is spread amongst the people of a certain hill that is situate between *Dongali* and *Tigremahon*, where a Saint, very much  
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respected by the Country people, was shut up in prison and condemned by the Pagans that possessed this place to die in the beginning of Christianity : He was to be furnished to death in a high mountain on the top of a rock unto which he was ty'd hand and foot: he continued there many days exposed to the fury of the Eagles and Vultures, and other ravenous Birds without any harm. These cruel fowl instead of feeding upon his naked body unable to defend it self, did bring up to him of the choicest meat that they could steal in the lower Country, and on the top of that hard Rock there burst forth a large stream of living water so near his head, that he had the liberty to sup some up, and refresh himself when he was dry.

The spring continues yet to run, it falls down above sixty fathom  
high

high from a steep rock down a precipice. They say that their fore-fathers when they saw this miracle, and that at the end of two or three months he was in perfect health, as formerly, they embraced the Christian faith. They shew besides the Tomb of this Saint that dyed amongst them in a very old age. It is visited by several pilgrims that come from the other Kingdoms of the great *Neguz*.

The Inhabitants are excellent Marks-men, they have been tryed in the wars against the King of *Adel*, so that they have approved themselves the best Souldiers of the Emperours dominions. They use Bows and Arrows, a long lance much like to a *Roman*, of late they have fire Arms, and some few pieces of Artillery.

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The Emperour chuseth out of this Kingdom his common guards, because that they are not only good Souldiers, but have a meen more manly than the ordinary sort of people of these Regions.

In this Kingdom that is the largest, and the best belonging to the *Neguz*, great numbers of *Jews* are dispersed. The Christians treat them with much civility, they suffer them to trade amongst them to reap the fruit of the earth to enjoy the liberty of their Religion, by that means great numbers have embraced that profession that did teach love and kindness to strangers, hoping to meet with greater advantages when they should become brothers, for there is no invitation more powerful upon the spirits of a man to oblige him to initiate himself in Religion than a sincere affection expressed  
by

by the professors of it. The advantages to be expected in Christianity are sufficient to perswade us, violence better becomes a *Mahomet* than Christ, he never made use of his whip, but to drive men out of his Church.

The *Jews* have here their Synagogues, but they are at present so little frequented, that I think the name will be one day lost by reason of their great numbers that daily turn Christians.

It was in this Kingdom that I saw a Black-a-moor with two heads joyned one to another, and two faces, one behind and another before, the rest of his body was very well proportioned. It was a monster of about twenty years of age, he was very strong in his Limbs, he discoursed unto us with one Tongue, sometimes with the other, and sometimes both together,

gether; he was obliged to feed behind and before, he eats as much as two men. The heads were distinct and separated until they came to the neck bone there they joyned together. This irregularity in nature happens more frequently amongst the beasts than amongst the men of this Country, for the heat that commands their inclinations moves their bloud, and carrys them to unlawful Copulations when they meet together, as they often do at the Springs of fresh water.

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*Of the Kingdom of Angote.*

**I**T is not so large as the former, but no less populous: *Bele-quanze* is on the South of it, *Tigremahon* on the West and North, and the Kingdom of *Adel* on the East,

East, it stretcheth it self about twenty leagues in length, from *Fatigar* to *Dangalt*, it contains two fruitful Provinces, *Buguna* and *Guanamora*; they are full of all manner of Fruit-trees, especially of Dates and Pomgranates, for here the Inhabitants are far more industrious than their Neighbours in improving their ground to the best advantage.

Here are many Religious houses built as they say upon the Sepulchers of their Saints, that were there interred, several good towns do belong to it, *Demars*, *Angate*, and *Buguna*, are the chief near the latter, which is not far distant from a large River that bursts forth of the lake *Barceum*; scituate beyond the mountains of *Ainora* is a large Pool of water called the Pool of *Pontius Pilate*, if any should cast into it a stone, or any other thing  
the

the water would rise, swell, grumble, and in an impatient manner run over the sides, although that which is cast in be never so inconsiderable; but if the water be let alone, it remains without motion. About 15 leagues from that place towards *Adel* is a little Town called *Bachlar*, where in the Church at one end of it grows a Vine; the Inhabitants name it the *Holy Vine*, it grows within the walls of the Church in a room that is made a purpose for it; It is planted upon the Sepulchre of one St. *Maximin* that was buried here. The people told me it was above a thousand years of age, and would subsist until dooms-day, that the Saint at his death commanded it to be planted there, telling them, that as often as any twig should wither, they would receive a considerable loss from the enemies, and



and that when it should dry up,  
 Christ would come to judge the  
 world, or the Infidels would over-  
 power the Christians; I was ad-  
 mitted to visit and pay my devo-  
 tions to it, the cluster of Grapes  
 that it yields are very big, I could  
 not see whether they grew natural-  
 ly upon the branches, that curiosi-  
 ty was unseasonable amongst a peo-  
 ple that would admit of no con-  
 tradiction, and that did find a great  
 benefit from this belief, for both  
 Heathens and Christians are pos-  
 sessed with this vulgar error, that  
 the story is true. I that was not  
 so apt to receive such unusual tales  
 upon trust, did desire to touch the  
 Grapes and examine their reality,  
 but the Priest forbade me, telling  
 me, that it was an impurity that  
 never any had been yet guilty of,  
 and that he wondred how I that  
 waited not upon the Altar did  
 I dare

dare to handle such holy things. I did not offer to examine further the business after this severe reprehension. It discovered to me as much as I was desirous to know, that *pie fraudes* are in use in that Climate as well as in ours, a continual profit makes them nourish this opinion, and cherish it in themselves and others.

The Priest sells the leaves, and the Grapes he says that he keeps them for the Wine in the Sacrament, the leaves are good for many sorts of diseases, as Agues, Fevers, Consumptions, &c. Many cures are said to have been effected by them, but I think that the fancy of the sick hath rather cured them than the vertue of the leaf.

## Of Beleguanze.

**T**His Kingdom is more barren than the rest, the Kingdoms of *Fungi*, *Amara*, *Bagamidri*, *Angote*, *Tigremahan*, do shut it in on all sides; It is a plain Country, but full of sand, only on that side where the River passeth is fruitful, the most considerable Towns are *Dabrab*, *Shubi*, and *Grochar*, all three in sight of the Current; there is nothing memorable in this Kingdom, but some places where the Inhabitants do pick up golden sand, which they refine and sell to the Merchants of *Melinde* that bring hither their Camels.

This Country hath no Barley, nor Wheat, but instead of those grains they have *Taso Dageza*, seed with which they make a bread very pleasant to the taste,

but much more sweet than ours. It grows in any ground, the worst as well as the best, nature hath thus provided for all Countries and people a means to supply themselves by their industry, if they will make use of it. This Country is extream hot, and the most unfit for dwelling of any one that I have seen in the Territories of the *Neguz*, the beams of the Sun beat against the sandy ground, and meeting there with an obstinate resistance, they return back into the face and uncovered part of the body; so that it is not possible to walk here abroad about noon by reason of the excessive heat, therefore the inhabitants do keep themselves within their Houses from ten of the clock, until two. In the Houses that are all thatched and supported with posts, it is very cool, the Sun-beams have not the

the power to enter in through the  
Reeds.

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*Of Amara.*

**A**Lthough this Kingdom is  
directly under the Line,  
there is not a more pleasant place  
to dwell in all over the world. It  
is full of Mountains and Valleys  
about twenty leagues in circumfe-  
rence, adorned with high Woods  
and Forrests, the ground is ex-  
tream fruitful, the people very  
civil, the Clergy devout, the No-  
bles gallant and brave. In the  
mountains are many little Villages  
planted in the low ground, and in  
the midst of them is a strong Ca-  
stle that looks like a Town, for  
the outmost wall contain about  
two miles in circumference. Here  
the Kings Children are kept with

the Emperours as Hostages of their fidelity. They are all trained up in several exercises, the only inconveniency is that they are here confined to live, which it may be to them is no inconveniency, for they never see any thing else but these mountains, and think the world hath no other place for a dwelling but here. The Bishop of *Amara*, a very grave man introduced us into the Castle where the Emperours Children were kept, they were then but young, the eldest was not above four years of age. His countenance was promising, we had a sight of the Gardens and Walks full of pleasant Fountains and Rivulets, artificially brought into these high places. The Walks were covered with a Tree not usual in our Country, the branches were twisted one with another in such a manner that no Sun

Sun could penetrate them, they were entertained always green, for at the root of the Trees on both sides of the Walk a little Current of fresh water doth always run, that refresheth the roots, and preserveth them from the droughth of Summer. It is as delicious a place as any I have seen in *Europe*, the Children have the liberty to hunt and divert themselves out of the Walls of this Castle, but they are never to go out of the mountains while their Father lives; for that purpose a strict guard is kept at the passage where no man can go or come without leave. It is both narrow and steepy, made with the hand, a few persons are able to keep it from all the world, in the castle are places appointed for the exercise of the youth, and over them they have Masters learned and experi-



enced in all those Sciences and Disciplines that they are to know. Here are excellent Astrologers, for that is a Science unto which this Country people is addicted. They have some here learned in the *Arabian* and *Indian* Tongues, others that give themselves over to the study of Philosophy and Nature, but very few do trouble their brains with Divinity; this makes them less notional, but more practical, for they know no niceries in Cases of Conscience to excuse their actions and inclinations.

The other Kingdoms are less remarkable, only that of *Damus* and *Gotame* are full of Mines of Gold. The Emperour keeps them with above 6000 men in Arms continually. *Tegrai* and *Yangue* are mountainous, and peopled with wild beasts & trees more than

than with men. Xoa is rich and fruitful, but in it nothing else remarkable.

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*Of the Religion of the Abyssins, and of the manner of their Discipline.*

**T**HEY do all profess the Christian faith with much zeal, the Church of the Queen *Candaces*, whose name they say was *Indich*, first brought this Religion into their Country, that was for the most part possessed with the Jewish. *St. Thomas* afterwards went into that Country, and there did confirm them in the Christian Religion, obliging all the inhabitants by the greatness and number of his Miracles to embrace it. Some opposition he met with from the *Grandeës* that had  
always

always retained the Pagan superstitions, especially in the Kingdom of *Damut*, where there is a mountain that bears yet his name. The Heathens subject to the Empe-  
 rour of *Æthiopia* had got him into their possession, and were resolved to make him suffer for the destruction and neglect of their Idols, they had often attempted upon his life, but neither Sword nor Poison could injure his Person, they sought therefore to drown him in a lake, and when that could not procure his death, they shut him up in a Tower built in the top of these unpleasant mountains, where he remained prisoner until an Angel took him from thence, leaving all his keepers dead on the ground, and brought him again to the Imperial Court, where he complained of the violence and injustice that had been  
 done

done unto him, which the Emperor going about to revenge, raised an Army to seize upon the King of *Damut* that had consented to the imprisonment of the Apostle. He remained here many years, until he departed into the *Indies*, where he preached also the Gospel. He left behind him many thousand Christians, and as they say, he brought unto them the two books, *Abelil* and *Menda*, and established here the Discipline that is used amongst them, with all the Ceremonies practised. They and the Captives of *Egypt* differ much in point of ceremony, but in belief they are *Entycheans* as for the most part. Some there are that have true and Orthodox opinions of Christ.

Here is the form of their belief published in writing amongst them, by which we may judge of them further.

*We*

**W**E believe in the Name  
 the Holy Trinity, the Fa-  
 ther, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
 who are but one Lord; three names,  
 but one Divinity; three faces, but one  
 similitude. The conjunction of the  
 persons is equal in the Divinity, for  
 there is but one Kingdom, one Throne,  
 one Judge, one Charity, one Word, and  
 one Spirit; The word of the Father, &  
 of the Son, and the word of the Holy  
 Ghost and the Son, is the same word;  
 The word with God, and with the  
 holy Spirit, and with himself is the  
 son of the Father, and from the Fa-  
 ther without the least deficiency or  
 division, without any beginning he  
 was the son of his Father without  
 Mother; no body can know the Myste-  
 ry of his filiation, unless it be the  
 Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
 Now this Son was in the beginning  
 the Word, and this Word was the  
 word.

Word with God, and the Word was  
 God. The spirit of the Father the  
 holy Spirit, the spirit of the Son is the  
 same divine Spirit, the holy Spirit is  
 without diminution or increase; this  
 Divine Spirit is called the Comfort-  
 er, a living God, who proceeds from  
 the Father and the Son, he spake by  
 the mouth of the Prophets, he descen-  
 ded in a flame of fire upon the Apo-  
 stles in Sion. They published all over  
 the world, and preached the word of  
 the Father, and this word is the Son.  
 Besides, the Father is not first, be-  
 cause he is the Father, nor the Son  
 the last because he is Son, so the Holy  
 Ghost is neither the first nor the last.  
 They are three Persons and one God,  
 that sees all, and is seen of no body,  
 he hath by his own counsel created all  
 things, afterwards the Son for our  
 Salvation, with the consent of the  
 Father, and of the divine Spirit de-  
 scended from the highest Heavens



to incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, who was adorned with a twofold Virginity, with a spiritual and carnal. He was born without any corruption, his Mother Mary remaining a Virgin after his Birth, for by a great miracle she brought her Son Jesus Christ without effusion of blood or pangs. He was a just man without sin, perfect God, and perfect man, having but one Person; when he was a Child he grew up by degrees, sucking the Milk of his Mother the Virgin Mary, and when he came to be thirty years of age, he was baptized in the River Jordan; As other men he walked, sweat, hungered, thirsted, and was weary. He suffered all things willingly, and shewed many miracles. By the power of his Divinity, he restored sight to the blind, he healed the lame, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead; at last of his own accord he was taken prisoner, whipt,



whipt, buffeted, crucified, he languished  
 and dyed for our sins; by his death  
 he did overcome death and the De-  
 vil; by his sufferings, he satisfied for  
 our sins, and bore our infirmities; with  
 the Baptism of his blood which is  
 that of his death, he baptized the ho-  
 ly Patriarchs and Prophets; he de-  
 scended into Hell, where were the  
 Souls of Adam, and of his Sons, and  
 of Christ himself which is of Adam.  
 This soul of Adam Christ did re-  
 ceive from the Holy Virgin Mary,  
 by the power and Authority of his  
 Divinity, and efficaciousness of his  
 Cross, he broke the strong gates of hell,  
 and of death; he confined Satan to his  
 chains, and redeemed Adam and  
 his Sons. All this Christ did be-  
 cause he was filled with the Divinity,  
 and the Divinity it self was with his  
 soul, and with his most holy body,  
 which Divinity hath granted verue  
 to the Cross, this Divinity he enjoys  
 com-

common with the Father as he  
 ways did; At last he was buried,  
 the third day, Jesus Christ the first  
 of the Resurrection, our greatest  
 light, the chief Priest Jesus Christ  
 the great King of Israel rose  
 from the dead by his own strength  
 and power. And when all was ac-  
 complished that had been fore-told by  
 the holy Prophets, he ascended into  
 Heaven with glory, and is sate down  
 at the right hand of the Father, he  
 shall come again with glory, having  
 before him a Cross, and in his hand  
 the Sword of Justice to judge both  
 the quick and the dead, of whose  
 Kingdome there shall never be any  
 end. We believe one Catholick and  
 Apostolick Church, we believe one  
 Baptism for the remission of sins, we  
 hope for the Resurrection of the dead,  
 and the life of the World to come. A-  
 men.

This

This is their Creed, they often do repeat it in their Churches, especially every new Moon, with many gestures which they have retained of their former Religions. The Priest that officiates says it alone, and three or four times the people do repeat these words, *This is our Faith.*

Since they have had knowledge of the *Roman Catholick Religion*, they have added something to their Creed by the consent of one of their general Assemblies, for they were careful to hinder their people from receiving any other Opinions than those that they had formerly embraced; for when they saw that our Priests and Jesuits were busie in drawing them to the faith of the Church of *Rome*, they published a little addition to their Creed, to inform every one of their judgments, & hin-

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der them to receive any opinions which they do not approve of.

We believe that the *Virgin Mary* is a pure Virgin, before and after the Birth of Christ; as she is the Mother of God, she ought to be loved and respected accordingly, but we neither worship Her nor pray unto Her. We believe that the Cross of Christ is a useful sign, it was upon it that he suffered for our sins, and purchased unto us Salvation with his own blood; His Cross is a scandal to the *Jews*, and a folly to the *Gentiles*, but to us Christians it is in much esteem and honour, we believe that the Cross of Christ is sufficient to redeem us, as *S. Paul* hath taught us, but the outward sign and use of it we employ more for distinction, than out of duty: And that we may never think it a scorn to wear

wear the badge of our Profession.

We believe that *S. Peter* was the first of the Apostles, that the Stone that Christ mentions upon which his Church is built, is his Law and Faith; which Law is established upon the Prophets and Apostles, unto them was granted the power of governing the Church, of binding and loosing; and to them was committed the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. But we do not acknowledge the Superiority that his Successors the Popes of *Rome* do derive from *S. Peter*; nor do we believe that he ever had any priviledge which the others did not enjoy. We believe that the holy Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs that are in glory did follow the foot-steps of our Saviour Christ, and that they have received from him the par-

don of their sins, as we do. We believe that we must honour them with the holy Angels, but we do not approve of prayers made unto them, nor of the sufficiency of their Merits to benefit us, or the Church of Christ. We believe that it is well done to confess our sins before the Ministers of the Church, for by their prayers we may be assisted and comforted. We receive all the books of the Old and New Testament, as they were delivered unto us by *S. Thomas*, without any addition or innovation. We believe that our Clergy have liberty to Marry, as the Apostles and Disciples of our Saviour were, but that it is not lawful for a Priest to have two Wives or a Concubine. We believe that we are bound to obey in Conscience our Supream Lord *Giam Belal*, and under him the

*Abn*

*Abuna* of our Church, with all the rest of our Ecclesiastical and Civil Magistrates and Superiours, but no other. We religiously believe that there is a place where the less Regenerate persons do go after this life, which is neither Hell, nor Heaven; what it is, and what the souls do suffer in it, we are not able to define. We believe that none can be saved without the blood of Jesus Christ, that it is sufficient to cleanse us from all our sins, without any other assistance, and that we are not to trust upon the Merits of the Apostles and Saints that were but sinful men as we were. We believe that there shall be a day of Judgment where Christ shall appear in glory to Judge all men; that we must all appear before him to give an account of our actions, and that after that we shall all either go to



hell or heaven; the wicked to everlasting burning, and the Righteous to eternal bliss. *Amen.*

This is the faith that the subjects of *Precious Giam*, which we are to maintain until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God grant us grace that we may never forsake it, notwithstanding all the persecutions and perswasions of the enemies of Christianity.

This addition was lately made, since the *Portugueses* and other *Europeans* have travelled into those parts; for when some Religious men did endeavour to perswade the Emperour to submit to the See of *Rome*, and joyn with the other Christian Princes in their obedience to the Popes power. He would never do it, nor would never suffer the divulging the opinions which we do embrace in *Italy*.

They

They do believe whatsoever is in their Books called *Manda* and *Aberil*, as the Gospel it self; they do fancy that the Apostles and Disciples being assembled together at *Ferusalem*, did cause them to be written for the benefit of Christianity. In them are contained these precepts.

To fast every *Wednesday* in remembrance of the wicked resolution of the *Jews* made upon that day to crucifie Christ.

To fast every *Fryday*, because on that day Christ was crucified for our sins, on these days it is commanded to fast untill the evening.

To observe forty dayes *Lent*, especially the *Passion week*, and then to feed upon nothing but bread and water.

To meet together on the *Lords day*, and then to hear the *Reading*

of the holy Writings of the Apostles and Prophets, which are to be expounded by some appointed for that purpose.

To meet also upon the Sabbath-day, and then to spend the time in prayer and holy duties, in which days it is not permitted to do any servile work. The *Saturday* they keep because God on that day had finished the great Work of the Creation of the world; The Lords-day is also set apart for Religious duties, because Christ on the first day of the week did rise from the dead.

Several other days of the year are kept holy, some are those that are observed in our Church, others are particular days appointed to continue the Memory of some great deliverances and particular favours which that Church and Empire have received.

They

They do believe that in their Festival days; and in the Sabbath and Lords-day, the souls of the damned are released from their torments until the Evening, but that they can never come out of that place of darknes.

Some thoughts they have of Purgatory, but not as we in the Catholick Church; they do not think that Masses, Prayers, or any other pious actions can convey any benefit to the miserable souls that are there frying in the subterraneous ovens; therefore they never bestow their Estates for the dead, but when they are departed, they leave them to their fortunes, as they do us to ours. One thing is very commendable amongst them; when any are dead that have left some visible estate, they send for the poorest persons of that place, & offer unto them gifts in the name of  
of

of the deceased; they make a Feast for others better qualified, and spend two or three days in Mirth and jollity at the expences of the dead; a custom derived from the *Scythians*, who did thus rejoyce when their friends departed out of the world, and did celebrate their entrance into it with the effusion of tears, or rather this practice is derived from the belief of a Resurrection, and the assurance that the party that is dead is free from all the sense of misery and affliction, unto which the living are exposed daily.

They do not believe that Masses can redeem the souls of men from the punishments unto which they are liable by their miscarriages, therefore they never see the Priest to huddle up before the Altar any prayers for them, nor do the dying persons leave any annual

nual rents for Masses to be said in remembrance of him, or to fetch him out of the flames of Purgatory.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist they do administer, sometimes every Sunday or Sabbath-day, but as it was anciently practised by the the Christians of Primitive times in both kinds. They are not afraid of that inconvenience that the wise men of our latter days have thought upon, of profaning the blood of Christ upon every unhallowed lip, or by spilling it on the ground, therefore the people do receive with the Priest in a most humble manner, almost prostrate to the ground, before they take it into their hands, they make three bows to express the sacred Trinity of persons, and then with lifted up eyes and hands they eat the wafer, or the bread, and drink of the cup,

cup, kissing it before they part with it out of their hands. They have as much reverence for that Sacrament, as we in *Italy*, but they do not think the bread to be Transubstantiated into flesh, nor the wine into bloud, nor do they pay any respect unto it, but only when they do receive it. I did enquire of some of them why they did eat it with that reverence, seeing they did not fancy it other than our ordinary bread; the answer was, that it was consecrated to a holy use, and that some respect was therefore due unto the Elements of Bread and Wine; but when that should not be, the most humble posture was most decent for those that received from Almighty God, so great a favour as the signs of Christ Crucified. They do not preserve either the Bread or Wine upon their Altars (that  
are



are much like ours) to another day, nor do they send it to comfort the sick; that custom they do not approve of, because they may so frequently receive it every where, that they do not stand in need of it in so short a time as their sick persons do continue in their crazie estate.

This custom they have amongst them, that when any hath received the Bread and Wine, he never ventures to spit all that day, but retains all the humidity that flows into his mouth, and swallows it for fear of casting to the ground any part of that Cup that was intended for to increase their faith: This custom is kept so Religiously, that there is a great penalty put upon every one that is seen to suffer any water to go out of his mouth that day, untill the evening; he is forced to pay to the  
 poor,

poor, and towards the reparations of their Church a large summe of money, and to suffer an imprisonment six days, during which time he hath scarce enough of water allowed unto him to drink. Thus they punish excess or want of abstinence by want of necessaries, a good way to make a man sober. They give the Sacrament not only to men grown up in years, but also to Babes and Children, for they do imagine, that seeing Christ and his Apostles do esteem them holy, of the body of the Church, and commands them to be admitted into the Communion of Christians, that therefore it is lawful to grant unto them the priviledges of Christian people, as if they had an actual faith as those that are more aged have. They are ignorant of those great disputes that have lately allarm'd *Europe*, and  
are

are not acquainted with the niceties that have put us together by the ears about the Eucharist. They know nothing of Transubstantiation, the words of the Consecration they understand, without any interpretation, that they declare unto us the use and benefits that we are to receive by this Sacrament in the Christian Church. They do not trouble their heads whether personally or virtually, whether corporally or spiritually Christ is present in his Ordinance. They hope for salvation without the knowledge of these curiosities, and I think they will attain unto it before us that are carryed by these disputes of the Schools to deadly animosities against our brethren; we had been in *Europe* very happy, if the liberty of believing in this particular had been left to every one of us, but the  
Devil

Devil cannot fish but in troubled waters, and turbulent men have raised these disputes for their own interest, but could never bring any benefit to the publick by them, but ruine and destruction. If like the *Abyssin* Church, we had not troubled our selves about trifles, we had spared the blood of many Christian Nations, and might be more ready to oppose the *Turk*, that daily incroaches upon us. In the celebration of the Sacrament, they use no ceremonies, nor insignificant gestures at the Consecration, but as Christ commanded, so they practice; the Bread is of the ordinary bread that they use in those Kingdoms, they take of the better sort for this use; and lay it in a large plate of Gold or Earth of a blew colour, and the Wine is of the juice of the Grape squeezed out of it on purpose.

They

They place both very handsomely upon a Table or Altar at the end of the Church, and after the Consecration, the Priest followed by some Attendants, goes to the several Separations, where he delivers both kinds to them, and they receive them with the greatest expressions of humility and thankfulness imaginable; after all is done, they sing a Hymn in the Church, and the Priest gives them leave to depart with a blessing.

They baptize both Male and Female, the Male on the tenth day, the Female on the eighth. This Sacrament they often do reiterate, but not out of necessity, but out of a custom that hath continued many hundred years derived as some do conceive from the practice of the *Jews*, that thought the bodily washing able to contribute to the salvation of

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the soul. These people therefore that were zealous Professors of that Religion, do yet retain many of their customs, although they do not believe those things that occasioned them at first for that reason they circumcise, they often wash, and to render their washing more beneficial, the Priest on the day of *Epiphany* repeats over to the persons sprinkled the words of Baptism, *I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, &c.* All of them do declare that they retain this custom not out of the belief of its necessity, but only because it hath continued so long time amongst them for so many hundred years, they know not how to reform it. But I think that they have no mind to reform or leave it, because it flatters the interest of both Priest and people; for on that day the Princes officers do  
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make a Feast, and give gifts in the  
name of their Emperour to several  
persons, they rejoyce and suffer  
none to do any servile work.  
This custom is strengthened by a  
Law very ancient, that whosoever  
is then baptized should be free  
from some small impositions that  
are laid upon them by the Prince.  
Their former Kings have thus in-  
teressed the people in the obedi-  
ence to their pious commands, so  
that although they see how the  
performance is insignificant and  
useless, nevertheless they do as  
Religiously observe this custom,  
as if upon it did depend their e-  
ternal salvation; when the Chil-  
dren are baptized, they give the  
Bread of the Sacrament softened in  
some Liquor to them.

Their Religion in gener<sup>e</sup> is a  
mixture of the Jewish and Chri-  
stian, for they observe many of



the Ordinances of the Law of *Moses* that were meerly ceremonial, only because their fore-fathers did so. This people hath always had a great Veneration for that which is derived unto them by inheritance, and in which they were first educated, so that they dare not venture to alter what was recommended unto them by their Ancestors practice, they wisely fore-see the disorders that change would bring amongst them, especially when the customs and ceremonies observed are in themselves indifferent.

If any be polluted according to the Law of *Moses*, they forbid him to enter the Church until twenty four hours be past, and then he must cleanse himself with water.

For their Churches they have a great Veneration, insomuch, that  
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in them they neither spit nor suffer any unclean creature to enter, when they do go in, they take off their shoes, the reason that they do alledge is this, because *Moses* was commanded to appear before the bush with naked feet, their Temples being as holy as that place on which he did tread, they think themselves obliged to follow the same Religious practice. They will not also suffer any to walk up and down in their Churches, nor to discourse of their private business, nor to laugh, so highly do they reverence them; our people in *Italy* do profess as much outward respect, but they bear less to the Houses of prayer, for it is ordinary amongst us to make the great Churches a Rendezvous of Lovers instead of praying to a Saint, many whisper their devotions to their Mistres-

ses that are at their sides; and they do return answers accordingly, thus they cheat the world that fancies them at their prayers, and they profane the holy places with unhallowed and lascivious actions. The *Abyssins* do shew unto such an excellent example of piety and devotion. They are no less Religious in the other observances of Religion; the water in Baptism it is true they do not sanctifie by exorcisms, nor do they mingle any other ingredient, but as the Eunuch of Queen Candaces was Baptised by pure water, so do they dip or sprinkle with the same element free from mixture; all that are baptised, they either dip or sprinkle them, that is left to the pleasure and choice of the Minister as he sees convenient, or as the condition of the child requires he accordingly deals with it.

And

And when the child is but besprinkled with water, he is looked upon as well baptized as if he had been washed in the main Ocean over head and ears, for they think not that the quantity of water does bring any advantage to the soul, nor that an entire washing is essential to the Sacrament of baptism; but rather so much only as may suffice to signify the inward washing and cleansing of the mind from all filthy inclination.

Their circumcision as we have said, they will not leave, but they do not esteem themselves for it, nor do they disesteem other Christians for wanting it, for they are sensible that the ceremony doth not render them more acceptable to Almighty God, nor doth it give them a pre-eminence above others. It were to be wished that Christians over all the

world were of their disposition, they would not then curse and damn their brethren for trifles, nor send them to hell because they do not jump with them into the same opinions, and follow the same frivolous customs invented by themselves. A Christian condescension becomes us, we should not rack and send to the flames, men of the same profession, because only they do not joyn with us in indifferent performances, but my design is not to shew the injustice of the Court of Inquisition, nor the cruelty of our Prelates against the dissenting persons that are scattered all over *Italy* and *Spain*, but to declare the practice of the *Aethiopian* Church, and their moderation.

They have not that uncharitable opinion of unbaptized Infants as we have, they do not judge them

them in hell or any other place out of Paradise, because they have not had the happiness to receive the Seal of the Covenant, but they name them half Christians here, and think that heaven is prepared for them as well as for the rest of mankind hereafter, because that they are born of Christian Parents, sanctified from the womb and in the womb, by drawing some nourishment from the Sacrament of the Eucharist when their Mothers do receive it, the least part of that being sufficient to sanctifie them.

They often make use of Confession, not as we do, but in a manner that commends their moderation, their wisdom and modesty. The persons that are to confess do meet the Priest at certain days in the Church before prayers do begin, where they privately confess



sefs unto him in general all those sins of which they are guilty ; they name them not unless they be heavy upon their consciences, then they consult him about the remedies proper to satisfy themselves, and about the means to avoid such miscarriages for the future. I could never learn that they were tyed to this by any other Law, but that which is derived from their own necessity and good ; they are not tyed to particularize their crimes unless they see it convenient for their comfort and reformation. The Priest assists them in this occasion, assures them of the mercy of God, of the pardon of their sins if they continue in that repentant, sorrow, and if it can produce the amendment of their lives. He prays for them, and then sends them away with a blessing. The woman that is near the  
time



time of her travel is wont to seek this comfort from her Ghostly Father. The man that is to undertake some long or perillous journey unloads and discharges his conscience thus to render himself more ready to undergo the hazard. Those that march out with the armies, take with them some word of exhortation and comfort from their Priests, they esteem this custom necessary to them for the maintenance of Christian Religion, and stir up from time to time mens drowfie and fottish spirits in the duties of Religion. By this means also the Priests do creep into the favour of every one, and become necessary in their Generation. We are naturally prone to contempt and sloathfulness in devotion, this practice is most proper to remove and rid us of those vices. Their confessions are more modest, more beneficial

Ecclial and Christian-like than ours are. The Priest doth not by any power granted unto him pretend to absolve them, but he shews them the gracious promises of God in his word, and tells them how pleased he is at repentance, what hopes there are of his mercy, he also warns them to forbear from ill company, and other temptations that do endanger our estate; after confession they receive the Eucharist.

They acknowledge the Old and New Testament without any addition to them 46 of the old 35 of the new are the number of the books; unto these they think it not lawful to make any addition, but they observe many other things that are not contained in these books. Their *Menda* and *Abetil* directs them in the manner of Discipline and Order that is to be

be observed in those Countreyes; besides, they obey the constitutions and degrees of their *Abuna*, and his Clergy, who commonly assemble once in two years at the Imperial Court to consult about the publick business, and give such orders as may prevent the mischiefes that the *Mahumetans* and *Gentiles* do daily plot against them; for their Priests and Religious men do labour to incroach upon the simplicity of the *Abyssins*, and to abuse their good nature, by making it a means to increase the Professors of their Religion; they disguise themselves into Merchants and other necessary persons, that they might have the liberty to convey, with less difficultie, their venemous Doctrines to the silly people whom they Court with all manner of civility. To prevent therefore their designs,

signs, and to give order to all the contingencies that do happen in a large Empire very often. This great assembly meets in the presence of their Emperour to consult about the preservation of themselves and of Religion; the *Abuna* sits in the Chair, unless when the Emperour appears amongst them himself, then the *Abuna* sits at his feet, and a Throne is erected a purpose for the *Neguz*, the Clergy, Bishops and other persons called from all the Kingdoms, are round about in a Ring in several ranks; when any is to speak, he riseth from his place and goes forth into the middle, and after an humble obeisance to the *Abuna* or Emperour, he declares his judgment, the plurality of voices determines the business in hand.

The

The affirmative part do lift up their fore-finger, and profess at the same time their content, and if the plurality be on their side above two or three persons, their judgment is good and lawful, otherwise the business is debated untill that number be found in either side. Their decrees are confirmed by the Emperour and his Privy Counsel, and nothing is lawful without his consent. He is the only Prince that governs in his dominions, none dares but by force of Arms pretend any jurisdiction over his subjects but himself, therefore he suffers nothing either in Church or State to be obeyed or imposed without his cognizance. The Bishops and Clergy have a power to execute their office, teach the people their duty, and see to their several charges, but they dare not innovate or com-

command the least new thing although it be very necessary, without the Emperors leave. He commonly declares his pleasure by granting a writing, unto which his Picture is annexed as a Seal, with a great Cross in his left hand, and a sword in his right. This Proclamation is conveyed into those parts that it concerns, where the people do in a most humble manner receive it. When *P. Clem.* solicited him to submit to the See of *Rome*, he would never do it, but commanded the Embassadour that had made that proposition, to depart out of his dominions, where he had created a great disturbance, by divulging Doctrines that were not known in those parts before.

Thus the Emperour is sole Lord of both Spiritual and Temporal, and will not give an account of his actions to any one upon earth,



earth. He is respected according to his Authority or Power, none dares oppose or contradict his commands, but they all yield a blind obedience unto them, professing their willingness to submit by kissing on their knees the writing that is brought unto them.

They make little conscience in the choice of their meats, but because it hath been the custom of their fore-fathers to abstain from some sorts of flesh, they do imagine that they had some reason to do it which they do not understand, therefore they continue the same customs to this day, they will not eat of any Beast prohibited by *Moses* to the *Jews*, nor will they suffer any of them to be killed amongst them unless it be in hunting. If any such creature be dead, they bury him immediately; they will neither eat of flesh torn

M

in



in pieces, nor that hath been hang-  
ed, stifled, or of which some o-  
ther beast hath been suffered to  
feed; they will not eat any blood  
nor flesh where the blood remains;  
in these particulars, they are Re-  
ligious observers of the Law of  
*Moses*, not out of conscience, but  
they know not how to leave cu-  
stoms unto which they were bred  
up from the beginning.


They have no corporal penal-  
ties imposed upon them by their  
Confessors, unless it be in the Co-  
vents and Religious Houses. In  
the Country those that commit  
any sin, do suffer for it the re-  
proach of his Neighbour and sepa-  
ration from the Eucharist, untill  
he professes his repentance, which  
commonly is done at the door of  
the Churches when the people  
and the Priest go out, the Peni-  
tent presents himself with ashes  
upon

upon his Head, and a sorrowful countenance confesseth his guilt, promiseth an amendment and restitution of the damage if any be received by the Neighbour, then the Priest absolves him, by declaring that for the time to come he shall have liberty to come to the Lords body. Those that are refractory and obstinate they punish by forbidding their Neighbours to converse with them. Every one observes this so Religiously, that they flee from an excommunicated person, as from a Pestilencious body, so that he is forc'd unless he will become an *Anachoret* and run from the conversation of the world, to reconcile himself again to the Church by begging the pardon of his offence. The power of Excommunication is in the Bishop of every Diocese, who is informed by the Priests of eve-

ry Region or Precinct, of the misdemeanors of the people; when he is rightly informed, not only by the Priest, but also by the congregation, he dispatches an officer called a *Shimoru*, to give leave to Excommunicate the offending person. The Priest in a full assembly informs the people of his commission, declares unto them the ill behaviour of the person, his wicked life, and the scandal that he had given to his Neighbours, he makes a long discourse of the means employed to recal him of his obstinacy, in despising the Fatherly admonitions that had been made to him; and further shews the danger to let him continue in their Communion. He concludes with an Excommunication, and to render this action more dreadful, he gives leave to the infernal spirits to seize upon such a person,

cast.

casting into the Air a fire-brand.  
with some kind of execration.

 But this kind \*

*\* The Translator.*

of severity is not often  
used, the offences must be very  
grievous to oblige the Church to  
cast upon them her thunder-  
bolts, and when she doth it, is  
done with that precaution, and  
with that time, that the offender  
hath leisure to repent, and every  
one is fully satisfied that it neither  
proceeds from malice nor design.  
When men by their open profane-  
ness and horrid crimes do disgrace  
the Christian profession, when  
they continue in this manner of  
life, and declare their contempt of  
God and his power; It is then  
only time to separate such from  
our Communion, who have alrea-  
dy separated themselves from  
Christ, and declared their unwor-  
thiness to participate with us in

the privileges of Christian Religion. This was the practice of the Apostles, and of the primitive Churches, they did shut them out of Heaven who declared they had no desire to come thither, and published to the rest the esteem that every one was to have of their persons. Amongst them the power of Excommunication was sacred and holy, it was only employed at the extremity when no other means, neither reprehension nor shame could recal men from their abominable vices; It was then esteemed accordingly, men were as fearful to fall under it, as to be cast into the flames of hell. And then it was followed by such effects as did declare the dreadful power of it; the evil spirits did take the excommunicated person into their possession, and did begin to torment him in the same manner

ner that he shall be in hell, so that many times people being sensible of their woful condition did fall upon their knees, and beg the pardon of the Church. It was also the custom of old Christians never to come near an Excommunicated person, all his acquaintance and friends did shun his company; so that when he did see himself abandon'd by every one, shame & grief did work upon him and obliged him to an amendment of life. In the time of the Christian Emperours this power of Excommunication began to be horribly abused and profan'd in civil Matters, to satisfy hatred and vengeance, some Bishops did Excommunicate others; at the least displeasure, they would send their adversaries to hell, and suffer no correspondence to be further entertained between them on earth;



by this means they did proclaim a publick war one against another, and made use of the sacred weapons of Excommunication to make good their quarrel, as if God were bound to espouse their particular interests and sins with them against those for whom they had conceived a displeasure. *Vilfrid* Bishop of *Rome* with one thunder-bolt of the Vatican was resolved to cast all the Eastern Churches from the hopes of arriving to Heaven. The Bishops of *Constantinople* Excommunicated those of *Alexandria*, and they excommunicated them of *Constantinople*; and in the same City these thunder-bolts of Excommunication were heard against several factions, meer scar-crows when ill applied; when Excommunication is abused to promote our secular interests, it is like the ἀποθέσις, of the

the



the Heathens, or the Canonisation of the Papists, a *Chimera*, a vain and frivolous action, if that may be so named, that profanes or disgraces one of the most sacred parts of Religion, and misapply that divine power with which Christ hath intrusted the Rulers of his Church. Let them take heed how and upon whom for the future they employ this holy weapon, for they may by the abuse of it bring a contempt upon themselves and Religion, that all their policy and severity will never be able to remove; I pray God to grant unto those amongst us such Christian wisdom and moderation, that piety may be cherished, and the profaneness discouraged; that peace and unity may Reign amongst us, and that they may advance the interest of Christianity as well as of this or of that faction.

The

The *Abyssins* never burn an excommunicated person, nor do they use any violence against his Person or Goods, unless he offers to break the publick peace, or to pronounce something to the prejudice of the Government, then they lay hold of him and secure him in a convenient Prison. They never make use of excommunication, but in cases that concern the customs and manners of a man, and never then, unless he continues in his evil practises after admonition; when they restore a man to his former privileges, at his repentance, they do not impose any pecuniary or corporal penalty, as we do in *Rome*, but he is admitted after the Bishop hath been acquainted with it, only by declaring it unto the Congregation with the signs of his repentance; for as much as I could learn they do not think

think that our purses or our bodily punishments can further our Reception into Gods favour, unless the soul be really humbled and contrite. The flagellations and macerations of the body usual in many of our Cities of *Spain* and *Italy*, were never seen amongst them unless it be upon the borders of their Kingdoms amongst the *Mahumetans* and *Gentiles*, whose Religions do recommend unto the Professors of them voluntary penances as high expressions of devotion; but this kind of devotion is not in practice amongst these Christians of *Abassia*, therefore they know nothing of indulgencies and pardons granted by the Rulers of the Church. This trade was never introduced amongst them.

They have an excellen order amongst them in the Church. The  
*Abuna*

*Abuna* is the chief, he is as the Pope in *Rome*, or as the Archbishop, his power is to command over all the Kingdoms subject to the *Neguz* in matters of Religion, and to see that the Orders or Decrees of the assembly that meets every other year be obeyed under him. Bishops are appointed in the several Kingdoms, but they do not receive any into holy Orders; That Office belongs to the *Abuna*, but these Bishops have the power of excommunication, and of reproving the Clergy, under them that behave themselves not well in their function; every Bishop is usually seated in the most considerable place of the Kingdom, where he hath so much Land belonging to him and his office as is able to maintain him in that degree of honour.

The

The rest of the Priests owe nothing to him out of their allowance; he officiates as the rest, and is no otherwise distinguished from them but by his habit, that is not the same with theirs, and by the respect that every one pays to his gravity, for never any young men are admitted to that honourable place in the Church, only merit assisted by the esteem the people and their Prince have for them, when they come to such an age, that all their youthful inclinations are past, deposite them to the Episcopal Chair.

The *Abuna* hath some dependency upon the Patriarch of *Alexandria*, Resident at Grand *Cairo*. When he is dead the Emperour sends to the Monks of *Jerusalem*, of the Order of St. *Anthony* the Hermite; they immediately proceed to the chusing of one fit for  
so

so great an employ when he is pitcht upon and sent away, he passeth by *Grand Cairo*, salutes the Patriarch in *Egypt*, and then Marches on his journey to the Imperial Court, where the Emperour and all the Nobles do welcome him with all expressions of respect and honour. He seldom remains in one place, but often Visits the Kingdoms of the Emperours dominions, to see and provide to all disorders that do daily happen. The rest of the Bishops are placed or displaced by him, but with the Emperours consent and appointment, unto whom they may appeal in case injury is done unto them. When there is any vacancy the Emperour grants the Lands and the Office to whom he pleaseth, the *Abuna* must afterwards approve of the choice; all the degrees of the Clergy are distinguish-



guished from one another, and from the people by some badge or habit, which signifies the office that they have undertaken.

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*The Translator.*

**T**HIS Relation is agreeable to the account that we have formerly received of the *Abyssins*, written by *Damianus Deo Ges* a *Portuguese*, and received from *Zaga Zabo*, the *Abyssin* Embassadour sent from the *Neguz* into *Portugal* to King *John* about the year 1526. *Damianus de Goes* contracted a Friendship with this Embassadour, and obliged him to discover unto him the customs and Religion of the Christians in *Abassia*, both Relations do agree in many things, I conceive that *De Goes* doth favour the interest of the Ro-



Roman Religion in many particulars, but in others he declares how the *Abyssins* are different from the Papists; the Reader may consult the Author, a piece of it is here translated for publick satisfaction.

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*Zagazabo the Emperour of Abassias  
Ambassadour in Portugal.*

**A**fter that I was come into Portugal, I had often many disputes with certain Doctors, especially *Didacus Ortisius* Bishop of the Isle of St. Thomas, and Dean of the Kings Chappel, and with *Peter Margalho* about the choice of Meats. It will not therefore be amiss to speak now something about it. First you must know that according to the Old Testament were observed the Rules for to chuse

chuse our Meats, which was com-  
 manded by Gods Word, that did  
 afterwards take flesh of the *Virgin*  
*Mary*, he did walk and converse  
 amongst his Apostles. This word  
 of God is alwayes the same and  
 ever living, never subject to  
 change, therefore what he com-  
 manded should not be eaten be-  
 cause of its uncleanness, he never  
 gave leave afterwards in his Go-  
 spel to eat it. It is true, he tells us  
 that what enters in by the mouth,  
 doth not defile the man, but that  
 which proceeds from the mouth,  
 but he doth not say it, that he  
 might contradict what he had be-  
 fore established, but only that he  
 might refute the superstition of  
 the *Jews* that did reprove the A-  
 postles for eating with unwasht  
 hands. And the Apostles them-  
 selves whiles they lived with our  
 Saviour Christ Jesus, never made  
 N use

use of unclean beasts, nor did ever  
 taste of those things that were  
 prohibited in the Law, and none  
 of them did offer to transgress in  
 this particular. After our Saviour's  
 Passion when the Apostles began  
 to preach the Gospel, none of them  
 ever prove by the Sacred Records  
 that they did ever eat or kill an  
 unclean Beast. It is true, St. Paul  
 saith, whatsoever comes in the  
 shambles eat, inquire not of it for  
 conscience sake; after that he  
 saith, if any unbeliever doth invite  
 you to a Feast and you have  
 mind to go, of whatsoever is put  
 before you eat, inquiring after no  
 thing because of conscience. A  
 gain, if any shall say this was sacri  
 ficed to an Idol, do not eat of it  
 because of him that told thee, and  
 because of conscience, &c. All  
 this St. Paul saith to please them  
 that were not sufficiently confirm'd

ed in the faith, because between them and the *Jews* there were many disputes and contentions; to the end that he might appease them, he sided with, and laboured to please the Christians that were not confirmed in the faith. This he did not to break the Law, but only by granting something of the ceremonies, he might win them to the faith. The same Apostle saith, Let him that eateth not despise him that eateth, nor him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, and he that eateth not, eateth not to the Lord.

Therefore it is an unworthy act to reprove forreign Christians so fiercely and in a hostile manner, as I have been for this and other matters that concern not true faith. It were more wisely done

to bear with such Christian men as the *Greeks*, *Armenians*, and *Ethiopians* are, to treat them with kindness and charity, and to suffer them to live and converse with other Christians, for we are all baptized in the same baptisme, and subscribe unanimously to the same belief. There is no cause wherefore any should so furiously dispute about ceremonies, let every one observe his own without hatred and railing one against another, for that the correspondency between Churches should not be interrupted, if afar off they use customs in those Provinces proper to the place and genius of the people. Besides, we have in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, how *Peter* saw the Heavens opened, and a certain vessel come down like a great sheet bending on the four corners to the earth, in the which were all  
 sorts

sorts of four-footed Beasts and Serpents of the earth, with the Fowls of the Air, unto him the voice did say, *Rise Peter and eat*, unto whom *Peter answered, Far be it from me Lord, for I never did eat any common or unclean thing.* The voice answered him, *What God hath purified do not thou call it unclean*; which being often repeated, the vessel was taken up into Heaven.

These things being done, the spirit sent him to *Cæsarea* to *Cornelius* a pious man, and one that did fear God, unto whom as *Peter* did preach: *The Holy Ghost fell upon all that heard the word of God, and Peter did baptize, &c.*

This Vision is thus interpreted by us in *Ethiopia*, the clean Beasts are the Children of *Israel*, the unclean the *Gentiles*, who are thus called, because they are worship-



pers of Idols, and act the unclean works of the Devil. And whereas the voice said unto *Peter*, *Peter rise and kill*, we thus understand it, *Peter, Baptize, Eat*; that is, preach and publish the faith and the Law of our Lord Jesus Christ to the people of *Israel*, and to the *Gentiles*. It is certain that it can never be found, that *Peter*, or any other of the Apostles did either kill or eat unclean Beasts after this Vision. Now when the Scripture mentions food, in several places it intends to signifie unto us Christ and his Doctrine; we must not therefore understand it of any corporal or nourishing food. All the learned do agree that this sheet that was shewn unto *Peter*, did teach him high and sublime matters, and not the inferiour things of the world that relate not to our salvation, neither are we to gather



ther from thence that we have liberty to eat of unclean things, seeing that can never be gathered out of Scripture; wherefore do the Apostles amongst the Decrees of their Council command us not to eat of creatures hang'd, strangled, torn in pieces, or half eaten by other beasts, or of bloud; for God loves cleanness and sobriety, and hates gluttonness, and uncleanness. God loves them also that abstain from flesh, and much more them that feed upon bread and herbs, and are content with water, as *St. John Baptist* that lived a Hermite beyond *Jordan*, he always fed upon herbs, *St. Paul* the Hermite led a sparing life in the desert 80 years, *St. Anthony*, and *St. Marcellin*, and many of their followers never tasted any flesh. Therefore my brethren you must not condemn, nor revile us, for *St. James*

saith, he that speaks evil of his brother, or Judges his brother, speaks evil of the Law, and Judges of the Law, and *S. Paul* advises to be content with our own traditions, and not to dispute about the Law of *Moses* with Christians, wherefore it is not handsome to quarrel with our brethren about the Law, or the choice of Meats, for meats do not render us more or less acceptable to God; therefore let us seek after the heavenly food, and set aside these frivolous disputations about meats.

These things that I have here written about traditions, proceed not out of an itch of disputation, nor out of contention, but only that I might justify my own people from the cruel accusations of many who having no respect for my Master the most Potent Emperour *Augustus* *Gloria*, nor for us  
his

his subjects, do revile us and call us *Jews* and *Mahumetans*, because we observe the *Saturday* as the *Jews*, and fast till Evening as the *Mahumetans*; they say these things should not be done by Christians, they do also complain against us for the Marriage of our Clergy, who have the same liberty as the other people: and because we are re-baptized every year, as if we did distrust the efficacy of the first baptism, because we circumcise men and women, which custom the *Jews* do not observe so punctually; because we keep the Law of *Moses* in the choice of meats; and because we judge more charitably of Christian children before baptism than they do, and esteem them not as Pagans, but as half Christians. I have been forced to publish this that I might justify my own people

ple from their slanders that accuse us, and that I might oblige the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* to be the more kind to us. I know not by what Religious instinct they have been moved to forbid me to participate with them in the Body and Bloud of Christ in the Sacrament, since I am come into *Portugal*, neither do I know wherefore I am esteemed amongst my Christian brethren as a Heathen and an excommunicated person which hath caused me much grief, but to him that sees and Judges all things I remit my cause.

I am not sent by my most mighty Lord the Emperour of *Ethiopia*, to the Bishop of *Rome*, and the most Serene Prince *John* King of *Portugal*, only to entertain them with disputations; but to conclude a firm league, and open a correspondency between them,

not

not to discourse about humane traditions, but to inquire about the errors of *Arianus* the Prince of Hereticks, and know whether the Christians of *Europe* do joyn with us in opposing his opinions; and further, that I might know whether it be the custom of the *European* Christians to assemble in Counsel twice every year about Matters of faith, as the Apostles have commanded in their Synodical book, the first assembly they order to be met on the day of Pentecosts, the second on the tenth of *October*.

Besides, I am come to know how we agree about the errors of *Macedonius* of *Nestorius*, and of *Eutiches*, about the last the Council of *Calcedone* assembled, but the Bishops broke up the assembly before any Conclusion, retaining their own opinions; My Lord, the  
most

most Mighty Emperour hath all the books of the General Council's, and is much grieved, so are all his subjects; for the discords and errours, these Tares that the Devil hath sown in the Lords field; the Bishop of Rome, we have always *est comedus*, the first and most powerful Bishop of the world, and were it not for the *Mahumetans*, whose Country being between us, do hinder our passage, & for the great distance of places, we should send to his Court very often. King *Emanuel* of blessed Memory did first open a way to us from the Red sea, &c.

Having spoken of these things, I will say something of our Emperour, & of our Patriarch. You must know first, that our Patriarch is thus solemnly elected by and our of our Monks of *Jerusalem* that there



there do dwell at the Sepulchre of our Lord. When the old Patriarch is dead, the Emperour dispatches away with all speed an express to the Monks that live at *Jerusalem*, as soon as they have received the news of the death of the *Abuna* with the Presents that the Emperour sends to our Saviours Sepulchre, they proceed to the election of another *Abuna*, whom they chuse by the plurality of voices. It is not lawful to pitch upon another for that office, but only upon an Inhabitant of *Alexandria*, and upon one whose life is irreproachable. When they have chosen him, they give unto him his dispatches with the messenger that came to give them notice of the former *Abuna's* death. They go together to *Grand Cairo*, to meet the *Egyptian* Patriarch that hath there his ordinary residence,

to



to the end that he may be acquainted with the election. The Patriarch when he approves of the sufficiency of the person for so eminent an office, he sends him into *Ethiopia* with the messenger, who must always be according to the ancient custom, a Monk of the Order of St. *Anthony* the Hermite, with him this messenger hastens towards *Ethiopia*, wherewith all expressions of joy and honour they are received of all men. Sometimes a year or two passes before this business can be dispatched. In the mean while the *Neguz* disposes of the great Revenue of the *Abuna* according to his pleasure. Now the chief office of an *Abuna*, is to confer Holy Orders, none but he can give them, or ought to take them away, or degrade the Priests. He never affects to meddle with the giving of Bishopricks, or of  
Be.

Benefices that do belong to the *Precious Giam*, who may do with them according to his pleasure. And when the Patriarch or *Abuna* is dead the Emperour is the Heir of his Estate, which is very great. It belongs also to the Patriarch to excommunicate contumacious offenders. He never grants any Indulgencies of those penalties that are imposed for grievous faults. The Sacraments of the Church are never prohibited to any unless it be for the crime of Murder. Our Patriarch is called in our language *Abuna*, he that is at present in this place is called at his baptism *Mark*; a man aged of about 108 years. Moreover it is to be noted that we begin the year the first of *September*, which is with us the Eve of *St. John Baptists* day, the rest of the Feast days we keep at the same time that they are kept by

by the Church of *Rome*. We must not omit that *St. Phillip* the Apostle came into our Country, and did there preach the Gospel of our Saviour Christ.

You must further know the name of our Emperour, that it is *Precious John* or *Siam*, and not *Priest John*, as here it is falsely reported; for it is written in our language *Siam Belal*, that is, *Precious* or high *John* in the Chaldaique Language, it is written *John Encot*, which hath the same interpretation *Precious* or excellent *John*. He is not to be named Emperour of the *Abyssins*, as *Matth.* hath written, but of the *Ethiopians*. He being an *Armenian*, could not know our affairs perfectly, especially those that concern our Religion; for that reason he declared many things to King *Emanuel* of happy Memory, which  
are

must be not so amongst us, not out of  
 any design of deceiving him, for  
 and he was a good man, but because  
 our he was well acquainted with our  
 Religion.

The Empire many times doth  
 not fall to the share of the Eldest  
 Son of the Emperour, but to him  
 unto whom the Father will give  
 it. He that now governs is the  
 third Son of the last Emperour,  
 he hath deserved that honour by  
 his piety and respect which he had  
 for his Father; for when he was  
 upon his death-bed, he command-  
 ed all his Sons one after another  
 to sit upon the Imperial Throne,  
 which they did, he only excepted;  
 Far be it from me, said he, that I  
 should ascend to the Seat of my  
 Lord and Father, which pious mo-  
 desty procured him the Empire  
 from his Father; his name is Da-  
 vid, his Empire is very large, and

contains both Christians and Heathens. In it are many Kings and Princes, Earls, Barons, Grandees and much Nobility, that is most obedient to him. Gold and Silver are given and exchanged by weight. Amongst us are many Towns and Cities, but not such as I have seen in *Portugal*, because *Precious Giam* doth always live in a flying Camp, and in Tents. This Custom is observed, that the Nobility might exercise themselves continually in Military Actions, for we are surrounded on all sides the enemies of our faith, with whom we have often many Conflicts, always, or for the most part with success, through the goodness of God.

This is the account *Zaga Zala* gives of his own Country, his Relation may be consulted by those that desire more satisfaction; for  
bre;

for brevity sake, much of it is omitted. *Scaliger* in the eighth Book of his *de Emendatione temporum*, speaks thus of the *Ethiopians*.

We have not been the first that have heard of the *Ethiopian* Christians, for they have Churches, not only in *Constantinople*, but also at *Rome* and *Venice*, where for a while they have had liberty to perform their devotions. From the Voyages of the *Portugueses*, and the Journal of *Francis Alvarez*, who passed into the heart of *Ethiopia*, many things may be known of them, and of their customs; until this time we have heard only of the name of *Ethiopia*, but it is strange that in the time of our fore-fathers, we first heard that there were *Ethiopians* from those of *Asia*; for about 300 years ago they did command in *Asia*, especially *Drangiana* upon



the confines of *Susiana*, also in *India*, and amongst the *Chinenses* a great Continent, until the Emperours of the *Tartars* did drive them out of *Asia*, for the *Abyssins* being vanquished, were driven out of *China* by *Cingi* King of the *Tartars*, when *Uxcam* the great Emperour of *Ethiopia* was kill'd. Afterwards *Cincan* Son of *Cingi*, and his Son *Bathin Can*, Emperours of the *Tartars*, pursued the *Abyssins*, and forced them out of *Moni* and all the Region of the *Chinenses*, and obliged them to return into *Africa*. We may at present wonder that this Nation should be so ignorant of the Art of Navigation, who was so powerful by Sea, and by Land, that it commanded from *Ethiopia* as far as *China*, from that time we have heard of the Emperour of *Ethiopia* by the name of *Prestigi-*



ani, which in the *Persian* language  
 (that is in *Asia* as universal as the  
 Latin is in *Europe*) signifies Apo-  
 stolick. *Padescha Prestegiani*, the  
 Apostolick King, that is, the  
 Christian King. The *Arabians*  
 call him *Melch Resuli*, and the  
*Ethiopians*, *Negusch Chauvarlau-*  
*vi*. There are many Crosses yet  
 standing in *Asia*, in *Japan*, *China*,  
 and other places, that declare how  
 large the Empire of the *Ethiopians*  
 was in that Continent; besides,  
 in *Malabar* there is a Temple of  
*St. Thomas* yet to be seen, that is  
 of the Structure and manner of  
 building of the *Ethiopians*.

fz

*A Continuation of Segn. G. Baratta*

*Of the Growth and Commodities  
of the Country.*

**T**His Country stretches  
itself about eight degrees  
North, and as many South from  
the Line; So that it lies exposed  
to the fury of the Sun beams. The  
soil nevertheless in many places  
is extream fruitful, and the ayre  
temperate, especially towards the  
Evening, then the great Dewes  
come to refresh the herbs and  
fruits that the parching Sun had  
injured. Part of this Country  
is very barren and incommodious  
for habitation, sometimes we have  
felt such extream heats, that it  
was not possible to subsist out of  
the shade, and about fixe miles  
further between the Mountains  
and

and amongst the trees, we had  
 such a pleasant ayr, that I never  
 saw any more temperate in Eu-  
 rope. I met with a great many  
 Lakes and fresh Rivers, especially  
 upon the borders of *Tigremahon*,  
 where the ground yields all man-  
 ner of Fruit, Trees, and Corn;  
 Pomegranates of extraordinary  
 bigness, Apples, Peats, Peaches,  
 and Apricocks are very small, but  
 of a very pleasant taste. They  
 have here a Fruit that they call  
*Cavashan* that grows in their Gar-  
 dens, it is very delicious, and much  
 like unto our little Muskmellons,  
 but of a contrary taste. The *Abys-*  
*sins* make a great account of it in  
 their Feasts.

The Corn of this Country is  
 very good, bigger than that of *I-*  
*taly* in most places. They have  
 Beans, Pease, Lentils, Barley,  
 Wheat, and all sorts of Grains,

but where the Country is so dry and barren that it will not answer the labour of the Husbandman, nature hath provided instead of Corn, a wild Grain called *Taf Degusa*, of this the Inhabitants make a Bread which is as coarse and unpleasant as the Climate.

In many places Oranges and Lemons grow naturally in the Woods; here is also many Trees that yield an odoriferous smell, and a great deal of Brazil-wood, Sugar Canes in great abundance, which the Inhabitants do make use of not as we do, for they have not the Art to extract the Sugar, but they feed upon them raw.

They have no Oil nor Olive Trees, but an Herb that serves them instead of Olives, it is called *Henar*, they steep it and draw out the juice that looks like Gold, very beautiful to the eye, and no less

less pleasant to the taste, for the Oil or Liquor extracted from it hath neither smell nor taste, and is very fat as Oil uses to be, so that the Inhabitants are by that means supplied with that which serves them as well as the best Oil of *Italy*.

The Woods and Rocks are full of Bees, so that they have much Honey and Wax, with which they make Candles, for they have no Tallow, because they do not kill many tame Beasts. Here is a great Trade of Raw Silks and Stuffs which the Blacks fetch from hence to carry into their Country, where no Trees are to be found to harbour the Silkworm. Upon the confines of the *Neguz* dominions near the Kingdom of *Damut* are Mines of Gold about the lake, out of which the River *Niger* proceeds, so that this  
River

river carry away some of the sandy part, and rowls it with the stream that is extream fierce, (for it falls from high Mountains) and runs with a great impetuosity to the main Ocean; upon the sand the *Negers* do pick up much Gold which crumbles from the Rocks, and proceeds out of the Mines that are dispersed all over the Country.

The *Neguz* hath people daily at work in them, they are commonly men taken Captives from their Enemies. When the *E-thiopi*ans go out to War, they save the lives of all those that submit themselves to their mercy, and send them to these places to prepare the Gold, and fit it for the use of the people.

Some Silver Mines are also here, but not so many as of Gold, for the hot country is not so proper for

for that kind of Oar. The parch-  
 ing Sun is more powerful in this  
 Climate in the bosom of the  
 earth, so that all the ground that  
 is proper for the substance of  
 Gold, it turns it into this Metal.  
 The Mines are not so deep as in  
 other Kingdoms, they are much  
 like unto our Quarries of Stone  
 in *Italy*. The Stone or Rock with  
 which the Gold is mingled is very  
 sandy, so that it will crumble with-  
 out any difficulty. The mine doth  
 usually run in a vein, it is easie to  
 distinguish it by the colour, which  
 is distinct from the other part of  
 the Rock. The Inhabitants say  
 that all along the River that  
 bursts forth of the Lake *Laira*,  
 many such Golden Quarries are  
 to be found, so that the violence  
 of the stream doth sometimes un-  
 loose the more precious part from  
 the rest, and carry it away to the  
 great



great benefit of the Inhabitants, who gather it up along the shoar after great Rains; and afterwards they carry it to *Guiny*, or to *Mozambique*, and other places of note where Merchants resort. In the Land towards the Country of the Blacks, lives a people very deformed and mishapen, different from the rest of men, not in the main composition of the body, but in the disproportion of the parts. They do not love to appear amongst persons that have the true form of men; necessity constrains them to entertain a Trade, which they do in such a strange manner, that they are not like to the rest of Nations. They inhabit the Country called *Guangara* and *Media*, it is mountainous and inconvenient for passengers, whom they never suffer to go through their dominions. The River *Niger*,  
so

so full of Gold passeth along their Territories, and furnishes them with that Commodity, to exchange for those other Commodities that nature requires, and that they have not in such plenty as their Neighbours. It is a business of difficulty to speak with some of them they are so savage. Those that Trade upon the River, may Land their Goods and see them afar off, but they seldom do shew themselves. They are very just in their dealings, and will not wrong strangers of a farthing, which if they did, it might put a stop to their Trade, without which they cannot probably live. They seem to have some Government amongst them, for upon the mountains, places are fortified, and the passages blockt up, and they have been seen to observe a Decorum in their manner of Life and behaviour.

From

From this place many Nations of *Europe* have their Golden dust, for the ships go up the River many hundred leagues to Trade with this obscure sort of people, who shew themselves afar off, leaving with their Merchandise such tokens and signs, that may expresse their demands, but they alwayes retreat at the same time into the Woods, and will not suffer any to come near. This hath been related to me for certain by many eye-witnesses, and by persons of Credit and Worth; this is a strange sort of people, which none of their Neighbours can certainly know.

*Ethiopia* yields many other Commodities, Hides are very plentiful, especially of the wilde Beasts and Buff-skins, which in this Country are bigger and thicker than in any other. Here are stuffs  
made

made of the Bark of the *Indian* tree that grows also here in every place; the common people are employed to fit it for sale and work. Some Spices, Drugs, and Roots do naturally come forth in this Climate called by the ancients the *Torrid Zone*. The Merchants of *Adel*, and *Mozambique*, and of other places adjoyning to the Sea do enter into the Land in times of Peace to Trade with the Inhabitants and fetch from them their Commodities, to convey them afterwards to the Sea-side, where the *Moors*, the *Arabs*, and *Banyans* of the *Indies* do meet them, with the Factors of other Nations, to take from them their Goods. Now this is the policy of all the Princes that keep the Sea shoar, not to suffer an *Abyssin* unless he be an Apostate to have liberty to Trade out of the Country

try of the *Nigaz*, of whose power they are very jealous, least he should recover again the Dominion of the Sea, which he hath lost, with all his Ships and Sea-port Towns, some few years since. When he offers to stir, all his Neighbours do joyn together to force him into his bounds, for he is lookt upon as their common enemy. Some nevertheless of the *Abyssin* Monks have correspondence with the *Indians* and *Chineses*, but it is only for those Merchandises that are for the supply of their own territories.

*A Short Relation of some of their Emperours found in an ancient Ethiopian Record, that the Author hath brought with him into Italy.*

**T**His Empire is very ancient, and was as large in its first beginning, the people were warlike, incroaching daily upon their Neighbours, especially upon those that live in *Egypt*, and about the River *Nilus*. The *Egyptians* have had continual wars with them. In the time of the *Pharoës* our Emperours were famous; *Moses* the Lawgiver of the children of *Israel* was the General of *Pharaoh*, or of King of *Egypt*, he was ordered to march with a party of *Israelites* against *Monchadir* Emperour of *Ethiopia*, he readily obeyed, and with a  
 P small



small party he routed the great  
 Army of our Emperour, not so  
 much by valour as by the assistance  
 of a divine power; the King of  
*Egypt* was grown jealous of him  
 and of his people, and therefore  
 he sent them to this war, hoping to  
 free himself from his fears by the  
 swords of the *Ethiopians*, who  
 were become terrible to all their  
 Neighbours, but God caused that  
 which was intended for the mis-  
 chief of the *Israelites* to turn to  
 their advantage, for by the Vi-  
 ctory, they purchased unto them-  
 selves the esteem and admiration  
 of all their enemies. It is true, that  
 the King did then begin to vex the  
 Children of *Israel* with hard bur-  
 thens and grievous taxes, thinking  
 by that means to weaken their  
 spirits, and disable them from in-  
 juring either himself or any other,  
 but this also turned to their bene-  
 fit,



fit, for it procured their freedom,  
 and the ensuing miracles that for-  
 ced it from those that kept them  
 in bondage. When the *Egyptians*  
 were overthrown, the *Ethiopians*  
 had wonderful success against  
 them, they subdued all the  
 Country as far as *Thebis* border-  
 ing upon the Red Sea, but about  
 thirty years afterwards there rose  
 a King of *Egypt* that was valiant in  
 war that recovered with his small  
 numbers of men, all the domini-  
 ons belonging to his Predecessors,  
 as far as the Mountains where the  
 River *Nile* hath a terrible down-  
 fall. In his race it continued until  
 the time of *Gambyses* who enter-  
 ed *Egypt*, and conquered it, but  
 could never subdue *Ethiopia*; for  
 when he sent his Embassadors to  
 our Emperor, they were sent back  
 with a defiance of his Power, as  
 he was passing over some of the  
 P<sup>2</sup> sandy

sandy hills between *Ethiopia* and *Egypt* with some of his Troops, they lost a great number of men in a storm of wind, for they were there buried alive; some of them saved themselves with their King out of the violent storm, but this overthrow prevented his coming into our Country, where our Emperour expected him with all his people. The wind did fight for us against our enemies, it saved us the trouble and hazard of venturing against them with our swords.

In the time of King *Solomon*, our Empire was governed by Queen *Maqueda*, she sent Embassadors to him, and afterwards went to visit him her self, she was kindly entertained at her return, she was brought to bed of a Son which she had by *Solomon*, called *Melich*, she brought Circumcision into the Land, and laid the foundations of  
the

the Jewish Religion, which her Son afterwards when he was come from *Ferusalem* did establish, commanding all people under his command to receive it. After him many Kings did Reign in *Ethiopia*, the most famous was *Ubsbarem*, *Habraini*, *David* the 1 *Solomon*, the 1 and many others. The Scepter hath always continued in the same race since that time until now. *Ubsbarem* was a warlike Prince, he conquered all the Provinces as far as the Sea-coast South-wards, and made all the Kings his Neighbours to send Presents to him, but when he was forty years old he grew amorous and wanton, so that his new conquered subjects took advantage of him in a Battel, where he lost all that he had conquered with his life, his successour laboured to revenge this affront, but in vain, until the days of *Da-*

old the first, none ever did recover  
 the vast dominions that did for-  
 merly own the *Ethiop.* Scepter. This  
 Prince was wise and very politick,  
 sufficiently qualified to sit at the  
 Helm of State, but he was no  
 Warrior for want of **Courage**; to  
 manage the affairs in desperate  
 occasions, he appointed a General,  
*Zecharia*, a stout man that did per-  
 form the Office of his Prince in  
 this particular. He was very suc-  
 cessful against all our Neighbours,  
 especially against the Blacks that  
 inhabit beyond the sands, their  
 Princes came to do homage unto  
 our mighty Emperour, and to pay  
 their yearly tribute; they conti-  
 nued in their obedience many  
 years, until the Reign of *Joseph*  
 the third, a Prince that was given  
 to all manner of debauchery, he  
 Reigned ten years, and was after-  
 wards killed by his chief Officers,  
 who

who were willing to preserve the State from total ruine; which would have happened had he continued longer upon the Throne, for he did not only permit, but also invite the enemies of the Empire to enter into his dominions, that they might revenge him of those Princes that he did not love, and that he did not dare to punish himself, therefore he made use of the strangers weapons to vex them that he could not otherwise overcome. From that time we have nothing remarkable, until Christs death at *Jerusalem*; for all the Princes that did rule until that time were neither good nor bad, they contented themselves with their own limits, and if they did lose any part of their possessions, they never made any great noise by raising their Armies to retake them. Queen *Candace* was a most

pious and Religious Woman, her Eunuch of the Race of Blacka-Moors did follow her steps, he made his Pilgrimage to *Jerusalem* every five years from that place, he brought the Christian faith that did daily increase, insomuch that not one was found opposing it within two hundred years after. The eldest Son of *Candace*, for whom she did govern was *Sheddi-ahr*, a most vertuous man, he encouraged Christian Religion in his dominions, but would never suffer the old ceremonies to be abolished, so that since, the Jewish and Christian are mingled together; he pull'd down many Idol Temples upon the borders, which caused the revolt of some of his most superstitious subjects, but one bat-tel brought them under his command again. His Son was *Adres-ehet*, he succeeded his father when



when he was but sixteen years of Age. A certain Heathen Priest had crept into his favour so much, that for his sake he did labour to oppose the success of the Christian and the continuance of the Jewish Religion in *Ethiopia*. His Princes could not suffer him long, they conspired against him, and placed his young brother in his place, but him they sent into the Kingdom of *Damut*, into a close Prison that hath always been in those parts; he did afterwards escape out of it and fled to the Blacks, who did come against *Ethiopia* with a strong Army, but they were vanquished and forced to suffer their Fugitive Prince to become a Prisoner again. The eldest Son of this King was an accomplished Prince, so that his Uncle had some jealousy of him, & therefore clapt him in a close prison



son with his Father, but when he was dead, the Grandees fetcht him out of his confinement, and raised him to the Throne during the life of his Father, who consented to the promotion of his Son. After him *Absalom* was a famous Prince, renowned for his careful provision against the enemies incursions, for he caused certain Forts to be built in convenient places to bridle them in. They were afterwards neglected and ruined by the Wars. He first began to encourage Shipping, by offering great advantages to the Mariners and men that did study the Art of Navigation. This good policy caused all the idle persons to render themselves excellent in the Sea affairs, and laid the Foundation to that greatness, unto which the *Ethiopian* Empire did afterwards rise.

*Benjamin* Reigned forty years, about the year 600 after Christ, from his time we have a good account of all our Kings, but before none are named but those that have been excellent for some virtue, or infamous by their notable vices. This Prince was full of piety, he reformed the disorders of the Clergy, and put them in that form of Government in which they are at present; before, the persons that did wait upon the Worship of God, had no settled allowance; the people gave them what they pleased, so that unless they did work as other people for their livings, they were reduced to great necessities, which nevertheless did happen in many places, for he that depends upon his peoples kindness, shall be entertain'd with course Diet, unto this great evil that introduces  
ma

many others in a Nation ; this Religious Prince did bring a Remedy. As he was the sole Lord of all the Lands of his Empire, and that none enjoyed them but from him, he caused such a quantity of ground to be set apart for the maintenance of the Priests and Bishops, as might entertain them with the yearly Revenue, and caused this Land to be separated from the rest, by granting unto it the priviledge of immunity from all Taxes and Imposts, so that they depend no longer upon the Crown. This liberality redeemed the Clergy from contempt, and raised them in the esteem of the people, that usually treats them, not according to their desert, but according to that State that they maintain.

After the good Prince, his second Son *Hechakiah* did Reigne, he

he followed his Fathers footsteps, therefore he was blessed with a prosperous Reign, his greatest enemies did respect him, he continued in the Throne about thirty five years, and a few moneths.

His Brother *Abraham* the first, succeeded, he held the Scepter ten years, and then left it to his Son, with all the Wealth his Brother had gotten.

His Sons name was *Haruahki*, a Warlike Prince, he began to leave the Cities, and to pass his time in Tents, for in the beginning of his Reign all the Nations subject to the *Neguz*, began to revolt from him, he could not appease the tumult so soon; he was therefore forced to live in the Camp, and to be in continual action all the time of his Reign. He caused it to be enacted for the security of the State, that the

*Ethi-*

*Ethiopian* Emperour should never spend above six days in a Walled Town at a time, but should live in the open Field. All the Nobility that doth follow the Princes custom, imitates him in this particular. They look upon it as a great expression of weakness and fear to run into a fortified place. This hath caused them to neglect such places, and suffer them to be dismantled by time, so that at present in all the Empire there are but few Walled Towns, and they are so pitiful that the weakest enemy might storm them. In the time of this Prince, Trade and Shipping did mightily increase, so that he was dreadful to his Neighbours, when he had governed the Empire twenty six years, he dyed.

*Heli* his Son succeeded him, he was the youngest, his Father had  
for

for him a great kindness which was increased by his address and handsome behaviour. His elder brethren were set aside, and he was raised upon the Throne, he was very happy all his time, and enjoyed a firm peace with most of his Neighbours, he continued Emperour forty seven years and three moneths. After him *Heli* the second *Melach*, *Charvah*, *Bonni*, *Grimshach*, *Habraim* &c. with about thirty Kings are to be reckoned from that time to the year, 936. In which year the *Ethiopian* Emperours that were grown so potent by Land, adventured to enlarge their dominions by Sea in *Asia*; for that intent *David* Emperour of *Ethiopia*, prepared a Fleet of above 500 Sail of ships small and great to transport his Army, composed of 60000 Men, both Horse and Foot, with this  
 nume-



numerous Army he Landed in *Arabia*, and conquered all that part of the Country that lies upon the Sea-shoar. The *Abyssins* found their abode in *Asia* far more pleasant than in *Africa*, therefore great numbers of men went over and passed the Seas into the new conquests. The *Persians* and *Arabians* did oppose their designs, but our Emperour being there in person, did so order his business that all the Forces that were sent against us were routed, many bat-tels were fought between us with various success.

The last was near the place where the River *Euphrates* discharges it self into the Sea, seven Kings were met upon the place with all the men that they could conveniently bring to withstand our Emperour. The enemies reckoned about two hundred thousand men  
in



their Army; we had then about  
 forty thousand, this unequal num-  
 ber did encounter them, and by  
 the wonderful goodness of God  
 they did overcome them. This  
 Victory opened a way to our suc-  
 cess in *Asia*, for it rendred the  
 name of *Ethiopia* most terrible, so  
 that none did dare to meet us with  
 equal numbers of men, every year  
 our people sent great numbers of  
 men, with their Families, to  
 inhabit in *Asia*, and by that  
 means to secure their interest  
 from the ancient Inhabitants by  
 force of Arms. The next that  
 succeeded in the Empire was *Un-*  
*gan* I. A man no less Valarous  
 than his Father, a great lover of  
 Learning and of the Learned men,  
 he enlarged his dominions beyond  
 the River *Indus*, and conquered  
 all that part of the Country that  
 is so fruitful, that the *Asiatiques*  
 esteem it the best and most fruitful

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Province of that part of the world. This Prince had several encounters with his Neighbours *Asia*, where he made for the most part his residence. In one the King of *Malabar* came against him with 40000 Foot and Horse. The *Ethiopians* were full of valour and courage, but the numbers of their enemies put them to great straits, so that they offered to render themselves into their hands in case they would suffer them quietly to depart with their lives saved. The enemy would not accept of that offer, to his own detriment, for ours being refused the condition proposed, and seeing nothing but death, or at least but bondage and misery prepared for them and their Prince, they took courage, encounter'd the enemy with a great resolution broke the first ranks of them, and then pursued them with that fury, that they

they left not killing until the whole multitude with their King at their head fled away, leaving all their own spoils, and the Goods that they had taken in the former advantages they had had against our Emperour. Several Emperours did succeed him, but not to his Fortune and Success unless it be *Joseph*, 3. *Judahr*, *Macarius*, and *Paulus*. They carryed the terror of our Arms into *China*, and there possessed themselves of many large Provinces which we enjoyed until the year 1436. The Tartars about that time made some In-roads into *China*, and finding the Climate good, and the Country fruitful, they invited their Countrymen into those Regions. Some few years after they had gathered a numerous Army to enter *China*, they conquer'd the Emperour of that Country,

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who

who had desired our assistance against them, we complied with their desires, our Emperour sent 30000 men to their assistance, but by the stratagems and valour of the Tartars, our men were almost all slain. The *Chinenses* being destitute of that succour, yielded themselves to the mercy of the Conquerours, who thought upon nothing but how to revenge themselves upon us; they came therefore with their own forces, & with those that they had gathered in the Country, and drive out our people out of *China*, giving no quarter to those that submitted to them. There arose some dispute between some of our Generals at that time, that assisted the Tartars against us, so that when *Uncan* was kill'd in a battel by *Cingi* the Tartar Prince, all our Countrymen left *Asia*, with all hopes

hopes of returning thither again. Since, we have had many grievous encounters with our enemies the *Mahumetans* and *Gentiles*, who have sometimes persecuted us into the heart of the Country when they took us at an advantage. About the year 1434 the King of *Adel* with many of our Neighbours stormed our Sea-port Towns when our Emperour was but young, and so shut us in, that we have no place to entertain Commerce with any Nation without their leave.

In the year of our Lord several *Portugueses* came from *Goa* into our Country, our Emperour dispatcht away some Embassadors with them to *Rome* and *Portugal*, 1486 came into *Ethiopia* from *John* King of *Portugal*, *Pedro de Caeilhamec a lenzo de Pavia* to *Alexander* our *Neguz*, that treated them well.

*Claudius* succeeded *Alexander*,  
and after him *Adamas*, who was  
inclined to favour the Heathens  
superstitions, he persecuted the  
Christians, but met at last with a  
just Reward of his Actions, for he  
was kill'd by his enemies in a bat-  
tel.

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**F I N I S.**

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Translated by *G. D.*

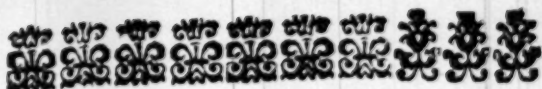
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To the Worshipful

*Thomas Windham Esq;*

SIR,

**H**ere are the Travels of our Italian Gentleman, that you have so long desired to peruse in our Language. It is an excellent description of that Great Empire that is so near related unto us by Religion, and nevertheless at such a distance from us. I hope it will fully answer your expectation, for you shall find in it most delightful passages, with an exact account of the Manners, Laws, Government, and of all other particulars in the Dominions of Ethiopia, worth the notice of an Inge-

nious Traveller. It may be that this small Treatise may meet with the ill fortune which such are to expect that thwart or disapprove of grand designs and furious enterprises. It matters not what aspersions may be raised to darken its Truth, and hinder its appearance and credit; I hope the probability of all the matters related, & that may be also gathered from the place where it was first published, will dissipate all envious vapours, and cause Ethiopia to appear amongst us in its own shape and form. Our Gentleman had committed an act not agreeable to that Judgment that he shews in his writings to publish things of a Kingdom so well known to most parts of Italy, by reason of the continual correspondency that the Princes of it do entertain by their Factors with the Grand Neguz ) had there been any thing in his Relation not real, or untrue. His Book had not found  
that

that universal applause to betwixt  
honoured with the Press, had it not  
found amongst his Country-men a re-  
ception suitable to its worth. Let the  
ill-natured and peevish minds, that  
credit nothing but what they see, e-  
steem of this Translation, and of the  
original as they please; I know Sir,  
that all sober-minded Persons as your  
self, will find both Sweetness and  
Profit in the Reading of it; however  
I should desire, that you will look upon  
these labours as a Confirmation of  
the Title that I shall alwayes covet,  
I mean of

Sir,

Your most faithful and ob-  
liged Servant,

G. D.

Books







A  
 DESCRIPTION  
 OF THE  
 COUNTRY  
 OF  
 Precious John;  
 Vulgarly called  
*PRESTER JOHN.*

**T**He Empire of *Aethiopia*, is  
 not inferiour to the lar-  
 gest in the World, if we  
 consider that vast Continent that  
 (B) was

was anciently, and should be now under the Command of the lawful Heir. It contained above thirty large Kingdoms, and many fruitful Provinces well furnished with Men, and stored with Rich Commodities; but the late unhappy Wars with the Neighbour Kings have much weakned this growing Empire, and reduced it to a little number.

The Turks, the *Gialas*, the King of *Mozambique*, the *Moors*, and several others that surround this Christian Principality, have dis-membred the Provinces and Kingdoms that were anciently subject to it, and submitted them to their several Jurisdictions. The *Moors* have seized on the Seacoast, the *Turks* have conquer'd the most fruitful Kingdoms that confine upon *Egypt*, the *Gialas* a war-like Re-publick of *Africa*,  
com-

command several large Territories that belong unto this Imperial Crown. The King of *Mozambique* and the rest have robbed it of its chief Jewels and Ornaments, so that at present it is nothing so large, nor so considerable as formerly it was. The cause of these great Losses must be attributed to the Cowardise and unexperience of the Inhabitants more inclinable to Superstition than war-like feats, and to the diversity of Religion in which these Nations differ much from the Abyssins. The *Turks* and *Moors* are nourished up in the Mahumetan, the *Gialas* and they of *Mozambique* in the Heathenish Idolatrie (which cannot comply with the Christian Truth.) The Professors of the former, have a natural antipathy against the Profelites of the latter; insomuch,

that they can scarce suffer them to breath in the same air. This hatred entertained by the different ways of worshipping the Creator, hath fomented all these wars and troubles that have for many hundred years shaken the Abyffin Empire, and separated from it the most excellent, and the largest Provinces that did belong unto it; so that at present it is reduced to a very narrow Circuit in comparison of what it was. The Emperour nevertheless maintains the same State as he did formerly, and claims a right to all those Kingdoms that he hath lost. His present Dominions are not above 800 English miles in length, and 600 in bredth; they contain these Kingdoms, *Amara, Tigre-mahen, Angot, Xoa, Gerama, Bagamidri, Damut, Falegar, Barnagatz, Baru, Tigrat, Yargue*; so that they

they are limited on the North by *Nubia*, and the Mountains and Sands that separate them from *Egypt*; on the East, by the Kingdoms of *Zangebara*, *Aiana* and *Adel*, which lie upon the red Sea; on the South, the Provinces of *Casutes* and *Fungi* do shut it, and on the West this Empire confines upon *Congo*, *Medra* and the *Blacks*. This Rich and In-land Country I have discovered by my Travels, and now that I am so happily returned to my own Native soil, after so long and troublesome a Journey, I owe to my Country a Relation of those things that I have learned, which I may say, never any knew so much of this place before, as the Reader may find in this Book. In the year 1655. some Merchants of *Florence* were preparing to sail for *Alexandria*, I resolved to adventure my self in their

Company, out of a great desire to visit the Holy-Land, and see foreign places. I had then received some discontent at home, which made me seek my satisfaction abroad; having therefore furnished my self with large sums of money, and a Man Servant, I embarked with them in a Dutch bottom, and in a fortnights time we landed in that ancient City which *Alexander* had built. The plague was then very hot in that place, which obliged us to a short stay there. Some French Merchants were then going for *Grand Cairo*; my company perswaded me to take my journey with them, and visit the curiosities of that large City; I was not willing to take that Road so soon, for I desired first to pay my devotions at the Sepulcher of our Lord, but the perswasions of my friends forced me



me to leave that journey until my return, because we could not find a fit opportunity to travel into the Holy-Land. I went therefore with the French Merchants to *Cairo*, and spent some days there in viewing all the Rarities of that Great City; we had a sight there and in our way of many Antiquities which are so well known to all the world, that I shall not so much as mention them. I had not been there a month, but a *Caravan* was preparing for the Red Sea. The French Consul, at whose house I lay, encouraged me to take that occasion of discovering those Parts where Christians of Quality seldom adventure themselves; assuring me, that it would be worth my while to see those remote places, and discover something to the Christian world, which was not known before. It

happened that as I was meditating upon this journey, an *Abuna* or a High Priest of the *Abyssins* came to the Patriarchs house from *Ferusalem*, in his journey towards *Ethiopia*, intending to take the same way as the *Caravan*, because it was the safest. This accident I lookt upon as an invitation of providence amongst those *African* Christians that are not well known to our Northern Climates. Having therefore furnished myself with Moneys and Bills of Exchange for so long a journey, I sought the acquaintance of the *Abuna* before my departure. It was no difficulty to obtain, for he was learned in the *Italian* Tongue, and well versed in the manner and Customs of the *Franks*; he was a Man of a swarthy countenance, both pleasant and grave, of a high stature, about 60 years of age,

age, very lusty; he had not many to attend him, for he was not willing to discover himself amongst the *Turks*, who might have made advantage of him, by obliging him to larger disbursements than his Estate could allow: I was resolved to accompany him into his own Country, and visit the Court of the great *Neguz* so famous all over the world; we therefore engaged our selves in the *Caravan*. I went for an *Italian* pilgrim, whose Person is much respected amongst the Heathens themselves, and least subject to the affronts and insults of strangers. The *Abna* was also in the disguise of a Merchant, he had with him some Goods of a small value; we began our journey in the moneth of *March*, and through several misfortunes we arrived at the Port Town of the Red Sea called *Suez*,

a

a famous place for Trade, it is the passage into *Arabia Indostan* and all other Countries of *Asia*. Here are therefore a great company of Merchants of all Nations that enrich this place, which otherwise would be very unconsiderable. It is a City fortified with a Castle and a Fort upon the mold as big as *Pisa*. The buildings are large, fitter for Merchants than Noblemen; some are beautified with black and white Marble curiously wrought. Here is a Synagogue of the *Jews* much frequented on the Sabbath day, here is also an Idol Temple for the *Gentiles*, but the poor Christians have no other place appointed for their Devotions, but their Chambers and Houses. The *Abana* found here some Abyssin Merchants, at whose dwellings he was courteously received, and honourably entertained;

ed ; they invited me to share with him in their Hospitality ; I accepted their kind offer, because I had no mind to separate my self from him, seeing my design was to accompany him as far as his Emperours Court. Here we remained several months, because we heard of an Army of *Turks* and *Moors* that were making an Inroad into the Territories of the *Abyssins*, we were advised to expect with patience their return, for otherwise we might have met them in the way and been brought back into Captivity , our liberty was too precious a thing to be unconsiderately ventured we; therefore remained a long while in this City expecting a fair opportunity to be gone. At last one presented it self not unworthy of our acceptance, the *Turks Balba* of *Egypt* sent an Ambassadour to the

Pre-

*Precious John*, who coming to *Suez*, we thought we could not meet with a greater happiness if we could be admitted into his retinue. We had some difficulty to obtain this favour, but upon the offer of 200 Crowns, it was readily granted. He took his leave of this City with a great Train, and we accompanied him upon Mules, we passed through many different Soils, some fruitful, especially of Date-trees, others very barren. The most part of our way was over craggy Mountains, where nothing did present it self to our view but wild Beasts far different from those that I have seen in *Europe*. We passed through some inhabited Land, where very strong Castles were erected to defend the Country from the enemies, the *Moers* did possess them, for this Nation is dis-

dispersed all over this Country, we found also some stragling Tents of *Arabians* that wandred up and down, we met with nothing remarkable, but Poverty and Misery, that seem to have taken up their Residence amongst the people that inhabit in this part of the world far in the Country. Their diet is such things as this barren habitation will afford them; their bread is a root, their flesh is of such wild Creatures as they can happily kill, their Cloathing proclaims their needy condition, it is made of a large leaf of a Tree that grows in the Forrests and Woods, neither is it sufficient to cover the back, so it hides the *pudenda hominis*, they are abundantly content; for that purpose a string is ty'd above their middle unto which these leaves are fastened, so that like so many Pendants



dants they fall down and cover what nature teaches to hide. They have one conveniency and advantage which they enjoy above our common people, as our Princes and Noblemen of *Europe* they wear not their Apparel long, they change often, almost every day. These rascally sort of people that nature hath brought forth amongst these mountains; did appear unto us almost like Savages, they did not willingly come in our company, nor are they desirous to change their habitation, their bodies were big, and their Members thick and swarthy, they spoke a mixt *Arabian*, not well to be understood but by those that know all the dialects of that language; those that live in the fortified places are far more sociable, they had chosen the most convenient seats for their residence, some of the ground was  
fit

fit to Sow and Plow, and to feed Cattel. We were admitted into one of these Castles that was erected in the passage of a mountain very conveniently to hinder and stop the course of any enemy; the Commander in chief was a *Moer*, he received us with some expressions of affection, but before we departed we were forced to pay dear for our entertainment, ten Dollers a piece, for that is a Coin that is currant over all the world. The Embassadour and those that did wait upon him were free, but for all strangers that did follow him in his journey, they were obliged to lay down the money or return back again. This little Tyrant had gathered together some numbers of men, who lived thus in this difficult place upon all passengers, forcing them to contribute to the maintenance of their lazy bodies.

dies. There are many such people that exact upon strangers, the Governors for the *Turks* do wink at them, because at a certain time of the year they send a sweet perfume unto them, a Purse full of Gold and Silver, and in consideration of this yearly tribute, they suffer them to exact, cheat and rob the poor Travellers and Merchants. We advanced far into the Country many days journey before we came to the *Turks* Army, they were upon their return from pillaging the Christians, they were laden with spoils and slaves. They made as much haste as they could in their march, for the *Precious John* had gathered his Army together, and was in the pursuit of them from *Suez*; we came first into the Country called by the Inhabitants *Ganfila*, next to *Dafreha*, and so through *Barnagasso*, *Lacca* and

and part of *Dangall*; we arrived at last upon the borders. The body of the *Turks* Army when we met it was near a large lake full of excellent fish. The people of this Country are ignorant of all kind of Arts, they have not the address of fishing; with Bows and Arrows, they kill Birds and Beasts upon which they feed and live; they own the *Turks* for their Masters against their will. This lake is in the Kingdom of *Bamagasso*, which was lately conquered and taken from the Great *Neguz*, the people retain some Reliques of Christianity, but with that ignorance, that one can scarce distinguish them from the Heathens, unless it be by the name, up and down the Country some sorry houses are erected, fitter for wild beasts than men. The walls are of mud and stones, the roofs of a

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sort

fort of slender Cane and Reeds  
 which grow near the water side,  
 and in low places, the middle of it  
 is supported by a Pillar of wood  
 that stands in the huts, and keeps  
 the whole Fabrick from falling to  
 the ground, for this miserable peo-  
 ple are not acquainted with the  
 Art of Architecture. The Towns  
 are composed of this sort of dwel-  
 lings, there are not many of them,  
 but those that are, have chosen  
 the best Land for their situations  
 near some fresh waters or lakes;  
 for unless it be in these places the  
 ground is parched up all the year  
 long, but during the time of the  
 Rains. In *Egypt* they never tall,  
 but in *Ethiopia* they are very ex-  
 traordinary about the month of  
*January* and *February*. Such vio-  
 lent showers do pour down, that  
 no creature is able to abide with-  
 out a shelter, several parties of  
 the

the *Turks* Army were stragling up and down, but the main body was at the lake *Gueresh*. When we came up to them they were composed of Horse and Foot about six thousand, not able to abide a combat with the *Abyssins*; therefore they thought upon nothing else than a safe retreat. They had plundered the Country people that were yet subject to *Prestor John*, and had carryed men, women and children into captivity. A sad sight it was unto us that were Christians, to behold our brethren and our Christian name so miserably abused by the enemy of Christ, our *Abuna* could not refrain from tears, he laboured to relieve some of them, and to comfort them in their affliction, but for fear of discovering himself, he was not willing to express too much grief or kindness to them. The

Embassadours credit saved us  
 from all affronts, we lodged two  
 nights with them; for during that  
 time they expected the coming  
 up of some Troups that were sent  
 to pillage. It is the custom of the  
 people that border upon the A-  
 byssins, once a year to visit their  
 Territories, for they meet with a  
 considerable deal of plunder with  
 little or no hazard. The Abyssins  
 are more superstitious than war-  
 like, they have been renowned for  
 Valour, but at present they are  
 Cowards, they suffer every petty  
 Nation that is daring to destroy  
 their borders, which is the fault  
 chiefly of their Governors; for  
 having so much Riches as they  
 have, so many Mines of Gold,  
 and other considerable Commo-  
 dities, they might allow a part to  
 some war-like people to fight un-  
 der their banners, and assist them  
 against



against their troublesome Neighbours. At present they have little communication with people of their Religion, which if they had, it would be a mighty support to them and their interest; When the *Portugueses* were sent with an unconsiderable party into those Dominions, the *Abyssin* Empe-  
 rour felt the benefit of forrein succours, for the enemy was beaten in two battels, and forc'd to yield to the Christian Valour. Amongst the Prisoners several Noblemens children were seen, who by their Meen and Garb were distinguishable from the ordinary sort. These poor creatures were led to be sold in *Turky* and other places as beasts, and the worst is, they were to be forced to renounce their Religion. What a grief was it to their Christian Parents, to suffer such a loss, to

have their Sons and Daughters amongst the Infidels? This inconveniency might be prevented, did these In-land Christians keep a strong Guard upon their confines, or with a stout resolution labour to drive these Robbers far from their habitations, or labour to revenge themselves, by carrying the War into their own Land, or by seizing on the Sea coast, and the passages of the mountains that limit their Country, where they might place such strong Castles and numerous Guards as might keep the *Turks* and *Moors* from all such attempts: But when we have fully taken a view of *Abassia* or *Æthiopia* Superiour, and of the Emperour and Government, we may be better able to see the cause of these disorders that happen almost every year in some corner of the Land. Having there-

therefore spent some days in the view of our Christian brethren that were led into Captivity, we took our leave of them and of the *Turks* Army, and marched on our journey towards a large Town of the Kingdom of *Tigremahon* called *Bashaw*, it lies beyond a large River that runs through *Africa*, it receives the tribute from other small Rivers, and then it runs through many Countreys until it discharges it self into *Nilus*, the people of the Country call it in their language *Togassi* and others *Guekrahock*. Were it not for this River, it were not possible to subsist in this In-land Country, but it divides it self into so many branches, and waters so large a Territory, that no part of the Emperours Country is without some benefit that it brings unto it, The Country round about did hear

the Marches of the enemies rage and fury, the Towns were burnt to the ground, the people either fled or carryed into captivity, the land and trees were not spared in some places, for they had cut down a great quantity to facilitate their passages over some Rivers. Here we came into a Country far more fruitful than any other I had seen in *Africa*, it was capable of more improvement; did the Inhabitants skill and industry answer the goodness of the soil, I do not find but this part might bear as excellent Fruits as any other place of the world. The heat of the climate quickens nature in the production of all Vegetatives, so that it is blessed with two Springs every year, or at least with two Crops of every thing that is sown or planted, unless it be in those places that want

want the benefit of water; we met here with some flying parts of the *Turks* Army riding apace after the main body, for they were pursued by several troops of the *Abyssians*. Those thieves had adventured almost near the Imperial Tents without resistance, not without considerable plunderable to reward them for their labours; we proceeded on our way about two leagues before we came to meet with the inhabitants of the Country, the first were a party of horse-men very well mounted pursuing their enemies, they complained unto the Embassador of the *Turks* violences, we were afraid that they would have violated the Law of Nations upon him, they received us with that rage; the presence of the *Abuna* hindered them from offering injury to his Person; Him they received with

with all expressions of honour and kindness, and suffered some of them to return back to guard him, the rest continued on their way. They overtook the *Turks* at the ford of a little River very busie to get over their Captives and Goods, we heard that they fell upon them with a wonderful fury and recovered much of the spoils, killing great numbers of them. They returned afterwards in triumph with much honour, having so successfefully encountred with their enemies. In the mean whiles we proceeded in our journey towards the Emperour of *Abassia*, who hearing of the *Abuna's* arrival, sent some of his Court to Complement him and bid him welcome; where ever he passed the Clergy & people came to receive him with more signs of kindness than pomp, the processions  
of

of the people came to meet us at the entrance of the towns, and when we came within sight of the Emperours tents, he sent all the Court to receive the *Abuna*. I did carefully observe all the ceremonies of Reception and Instalment. The *Abuna* as soon as he came within the tents, went to kiss the Emperours Girdle. He was standing in a stately tent erected in the middle of the rest, about it was a large place much like to a Market, where the Courtiers are accustomed to walk, at the right hand is another very beautiful, where the Emperours Wives and Concubines dwell; at the top of the Princes tent is a Golden Cross with an Angel holding it in his left hand, with a drawn Cymeter in the right. The *Abuna* went to change his habit and put on another, according to  
the



the *Abyssin* custom. It is a very singular one, none but the High-Priest hath the liberty to wear it, for it is the badge or character by which he is distinguished from the other *Papa's* or Bishops of that Country, and from the rest of the Clergy ; he was conducted next, to pay his respects to the Emperour, he was in the Kingdom of *Beleguaze* near a town very well peopled and scituated in a pleasant plain called *Ikroah*, about six leagues distant from the River *Tagassi*, I had the satisfaction to accompany the *Abuna* , for he was a man of a very mild and kind spirit, very pleasant in company, yet grave and serious, he was led by the Master of the Ceremonies into the Inner room where the Emperour lay upon a curious Bed of White Cotton Bed with a large fringe of Gold , behind him stood

stood his naked Sword, and round  
 about were the Lords of his Pri-  
 vy Council; above was a Canopy  
 of cloath of Gold, with green  
 silk interwoven, the room it self  
 was hung with the same stufte; as-  
 soon as the *Abuna* enter'd the room  
 he kneel'd three times on the  
 ground, and then ascended the  
 steps to the Bed to perform his  
 respects; In the mean whiles the  
 Emperour rose from his couch and  
 halt up embraced the *Abuna*, wish-  
 ing him much felicity in his Em-  
 pire, they discoursed some time  
 together, and then he was dismiss  
 with all honour and civility; the  
 Emperour was pleased to take no-  
 tice of his retinue, and particular-  
 ly of my self. I was also admitted  
 to the honour of kissing his Gir-  
 dle, a ceremony only due to the  
 Prince. I followed the *Abuna*,  
 who received me into his own  
 lodg.

lodgings, and would not suffer me whiles I was in that Country to be obliged to any other place for my retreat. Now I have brought my Reader into the Imperial tents of *Abassia*, it is convenient that we should take a view as from a high place of all the inferiour orders of men, and of all particulars which his curiosity may be inquisitive. And first

*Of the Emperour.*

**T**He Emperour of the *Abyssins* is a Prince highly honored of his subjects, because they fancy him to be lineally descended from that noble and Religious King that first planted the Christian Religion amongst them; and as they are extreamly devoted to it; so much, that they appear almost extravagant in many of their pra-

practises, they have no small respect to his Posterity, who first brought them the advantage of the Christian Faith. None hath access to him of his subjects unless it be upon solemn occasions, but the chief Officers of his Crown, when he rides or is carryed abroad in a Royal Throne, all his people fall upon their knees and adore him; this throne is a kind of Sedan, but far more stately, with steps ascending to it made of wood gilt over, covered with Gold, it is carryed upon mens shoulders, or between four Horses, the Emperor appears in it with much state, and with more glory than in any other thing that I have seen; He never stirs out of his tents, but 600 men do follow him at his heels, they are his daily guard, they wear a Livery and a Habic distinct from all other people, on  
their

their head a Scarlet bonnet with three white plumes fastned behind with a blew cross on their shoulders, they have a very convenient Coat that comes down to their middle, with a Girdle or Sash, over it a Roman Mantle hangs, more proper for State than action; the colour is green, it is not very long, nor troublesome when they are obliged to make use of their hands; sometimes they ride, sometimes they go a-foot, as the Emperours occasion requires; for that purpose he hath always ready in his Stables great numbers of Horses. The Emperours Person is whiter than any of his Kingdom, for the *Abyssins* are tawny, a colour drawing near to black. I never saw any others of his Relations or kindred, but I hear they are all of the same colour. The people interpret this

to his advantage, that God by this distinction, hath singled out that Family that is to Reign amongst them, out of which they always chuse their Emperour; their custom is, that he should never marry until he be crowned; then, with the consent of his Nobles he chuseth two Wives out of his Kingdom, he entertains besides as many Concubines as he pleaseth. They are always with him in his tents with all their Attendants. The first Male-child usually succeeds the Father in his Kingdom. As soon as the children are named, they are carryed to a very delicious place in the middle of a large mountain called *Amarak*, where a stately Castle is built encompassed with the River *Borohr*, and fortified with a strong wall. There they are kept with the other precious things belonging to

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the Emperour, they never go out unless it be in the Gardens and places of Recreation, with which this territory is abundantly furnished; and then they never loose the sight of their governours and guard; when the Father is dead the chief Officers of the Empire come to this place, and unless the eldest be incapable of the honour, they take him to succeed in his Fathers room. If there be no Sons, the eldest Daughter takes the Scepter. During their Fathers life, they are kept here as in a *Se-raglio*, to learn all exercises proper to their Sex and age. They are taught the *Hebrew* and *Arabick* tongues, humane Philosophy and the Principles of Christian Religion. Here is for that purpose a large Library of above ten thousand Volumes all in Manuscripts, some told me that they had there  
the



the most ancient Books of the world written by the *Egyptian* Sages in the time of *Moses*, by *Phanicians* afterwards, and by the Learned of all Ages. I saw some in the Library (into which I had the leave to enter) that were made of the *Egyptian* leaf called *Papyrus*, and others made of old Parchment that did bear the marks of antiquity. I ask'd the *Subdi*an Officer that led me in to see the curiosities, how they did to preserve the Books so many years from consuming, he told me that they do usually transcribe them when the leaves are worn or likely to decay, and that for that intent there are twenty three Persons appointed with a good maintenance for them by the former Emperours; their employment is only to transcribe and copy out the books that age threa-